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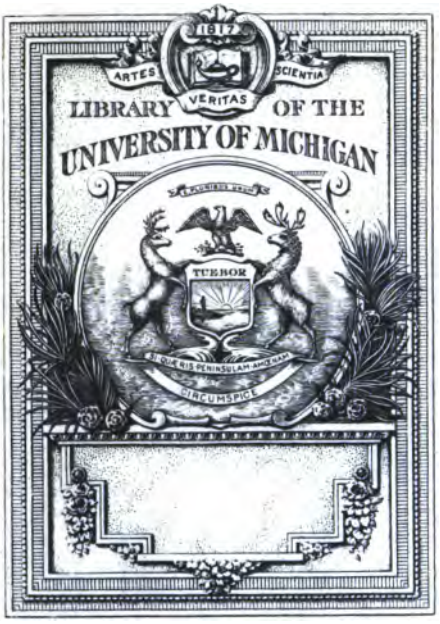

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("On the probable futurity of the Working classes")

(p. 230)

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ALTON LOCKE

TAILOR AND POET

ALTON LOCKE

TAILOR AND POET

An Autobiography

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

WITH

A PREFATORY MEMOIR BY THOMAS HUGHES, Esq., Q.C.

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. II.

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ALTON LOCKE,

TAILOR AND POET.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CATHEDRAL TOWN.

At length, the wished-for day had arrived; and, with my cousin, I was whirling along, full of hope and desire, towards the cathedral town of D* * * *— through a flat fen country, which, though I had often heard it described as ugly, struck my imagination much. The vast height and width of the sky-arch, as seen from those flats as from an ocean—the grey haze shrouding the horizon of our narrow land-view, and closing us in, till we seemed to be floating through infinite space, on a little platform of earth; the rich poplar-fringed farms, with their herds of dappled oxen —the luxuriant crops of oats and beans—the tender green of the tall-rape, a plant till then unknown to me—the long, straight, silver dykes, with their gaudy carpets of strange floating water-plants, and their black banks, studded with the remains of buried forests—

the innumerable draining-mills, with their creaking sails and groaning wheels—the endless rows of pollard willows, through which the breeze moaned and rung, as through the strings of some vast Æolian harp; the little island knolls in that vast sea of fen, each with its long village street, and delicately taper spire; all this seemed to me to contain an element of new and peculiar beauty.

"Why!" exclaims the reading public, if perchance it ever sees this tale of mine, in its usual prurient longing after anything like personal gossip, or scandalous anecdote—"why, there is no cathedral town which begins with a D! Through the fen, too! He must mean either Ely, Lincoln, or Peterborough; that's certain." Then, at one of those places, they find there is dean—not of the name of Winnstay, true—"but his name begins with a W; and he has a pretty daughter—no, a niece; well, that's very near it;—it must be him. No; at another place—there is not a dean, true—but a canon, or an archdeacon—something of that kind; and he has a pretty daughter, really; and his name begins—not with W, but with Y; well, that's the last letter of Winnstay, if it is not the first: that must be the poor man! What a shame to have exposed his family secrets in that way!" And then a whole circle of myths grow up round the man's story. It is credibly ascertained that I am the man who broke into his house last year, after having made love to his housemaid, and stole his writing-desk and plate—else, why should a burglar steal

family-letters, if he had not some interest in them? . . . And before the matter dies away, some worthy old gentleman, who has not spoken to a working man since he left his living, thirty years ago, and hates a radical as he does the Pope, receives two or three anonymous letters, condoling with him on the cruel betrayal of his confidence—base ingratitude for undeserved condescension, etc. etc.; and, perhaps, with an enclosure of good advice for his lovely daughter.

But wherever D * * * * is, we arrived there; and with a beating heart, I—and I now suspect my cousin also—walked up the sunny slopes, where the old convent had stood, now covered with walled gardens and noble timber-trees, and crowned by the richly fretted towers of the cathedral, which we had seen, for the last twenty miles, growing gradually larger and more distinct across the level flat. "Ely?" "No; Lincoln!" "Oh! but really, it's just as much like Peterborough!" Never mind, my dear reader; the essence of the fact, as I think, lies not quite so much in the name of the place, as in what was done there—to which I, with all the little respect which I can muster, entreat your attention.

It is not from false shame at my necessary ignorance, but from a fear lest I should bore my readers with what seems to them trivial, that I refrain from dilating on many a thing which struck me as curious in this my first visit to the house of an English gentleman. I must say, however, though I suppose that it will be numbered, at least, among trite remarks, if

not among trivial ones, that the wealth around me certainly struck me, as it has others, as not very much in keeping with the office of one who professed to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. But I salved over that feeling, being desirous to see everything in the brightest light, with the recollection that the dean had a private fortune of his own; though it did seem at moments, that if a man has solemnly sworn to devote himself, body and soul, to the cause of the spiritual welfare of the nation, that vow might be not unfairly construed to include his money as well as his talents, time, and health: unless, perhaps, money is considered by spiritual persons as so worthless a thing, that it is not fit to be given to God—a notion which might seem to explain how a really pious and universally respected archbishop, living within a quarter of a mile of one of the worst *infernos* of destitution, disease, filth, and profligacy—can yet find it in his heart to save £120,000 out of church revenues, and leave it to his family; though it will not explain how Irish bishops can reconcile it to their consciences to leave behind them, one and all, large fortunes—for I suppose from fifty to a hundred thousand pounds is something—saved from fees and tithes, taken from the pockets of a Roman Catholic population, whom they have been put there to convert to Protestantism for the last three hundred years—with what success, all the world knows. Of course, it is a most impertinent, and almost a blasphemous thing, for a working man to dare to mention such subjects.

Is it not "speaking evil of dignities"? Strange, by-the-by, that merely to mention facts, without note or comment, should be always called "speaking evil"! Does not that argue ill for the facts themselves? Working men think so; but what matter what "the swinish multitude" think?

When I speak of wealth, I do not mean that the dean's household would have been considered by his own class at all too luxurious. He would have been said, I suppose, to live in a "quiet, comfortable, gentlemanlike way"—"everything very plain and very good." It included a butler—a quiet, good-natured old man—who ushered us into our bedrooms; a footman, who opened the door—a sort of animal for which I have an extreme aversion—young, silly, conceited, over-fed, florid—who looked just the man to sell his soul for a livery, twice as much food as he needed, and the opportunity of unlimited flirtations with the maids; and a coachman, very like other coachmen, whom I saw taking a pair of handsome carriage-horses out to exercise, as we opened the gate.

The old man, silently and as a matter of course, unpacked for me my little portmanteau (lent me by my cousin), and placed my things neatly in various drawers—went down, brought up a jug of hot water, put it on the washing-table—told me that dinner was at six—that the half-hour bell rang at half-past five—and that, if I wanted anything, the footman would answer the bell (bells seeming a prominent idea in his

theory of the universe)—and so left me, wondering at the strange fact that free men, with free wills, do sell themselves, by the hundred thousand, to perform menial offices for other men, not for love, but for money; becoming, to define them strictly, bell-answering animals; and are honest, happy, contented, in such a life. A man-servant, a soldier, and a Jesuit, are to me the three great wonders of humanity—three forms of mental suicide, for which I never had the slightest glimmer of sympathy, or even comprehension.

. . . . . .

At last we went down to dinner, after my personal adornments had been carefully superintended by my cousin, who gave me, over and above, various warnings and exhortations as to my behaviour; which, of course, took due effect, in making me as nervous, constrained, and affected, as possible. When I appeared in the drawing-room, I was kindly welcomed by the dean, the two ladies, and Lord Lynedale.

But, as I stood fidgeting and blushing, sticking my arms and legs, and head into all sorts of quaint positions—trying one attitude, and thinking it looked awkward, and so exchanged it for another, more awkward still—my eye fell suddenly on a slip of paper, which had conveyed itself, I never knew how, upon the pages of the Illustrated Book of Ballads, which I was turning over:—

"Be natural, and you will be gentlemanlike. If you wish others to forget your rank, do not forget it yourself. If you wish others to remember you with

pleasure, forget yourself; and be just what God has made you."

I could not help fancying that the lesson, whether intentionally or not, was meant for me; and a passing impulse made me take up the slip, fold it together, and put it into my bosom. Perhaps it was Lillian's hand-writing! I looked round at the ladies: but their faces were each buried behind a book.

We went in to dinner; and, to my delight, I sat next to my goddess, while opposite me was my cousin. Luckily, I had got some directions from him as to what to say and do, when my wonders, the servants, thrust eatables and drinkables over my shoulders.

Lillian and my cousin chatted away about church-architecture, and the restorations which were going on at the cathedral; while I, for the first half of dinner, feasted my eyes with the sight of a beauty, in which I seemed to discover every moment some new excellence. Every time I looked up at her, my eyes dazzled, my face burnt, my heart sank, and soft thrills ran through every nerve. And yet, Heaven knows, my emotions were as pure as those of an infant. It was beauty, longed for, and found at last, which I adored as a thing not to be possessed, but worshipped. The desire, even the thought, of calling her my own, never crossed my mind. I felt that I could gladly die, if by death I could purchase the permission to watch her. I understood, then, and for ever after, the pure devotion of the old knights and troubadours of chivalry. I seemed to myself to be their brother

—one of the holy guild of poet-lovers. I was a new Petrarch, basking in the light-rays of a new Laura. I gazed, and gazed, and found new life in gazing, and was content.

But my simple bliss was perfected, when she suddenly turned to me, and began asking me questions on the very points on which I was best able to answer. She talked about poetry, Tennyson and Wordsworth; asked me if I understood Browning's Sordello; and then comforted me, after my stammering confession that I did not, by telling me she was delighted to hear that; for she did not understand it either, and it was so pleasant to have a companion in ignorance. Then she asked me, if I was much struck with the buildings in Cambridge?—had they inspired me with any verses yet?—I was bound to write something about them—and so on; making the most commonplace remarks look brilliant, from the ease and liveliness with which they were spoken, and the tact with which they were made pleasant to the listener: while I wondered at myself, for enjoying from her lips the flippant, sparkling tattle, which had hitherto made young women to me objects of unspeakable dread, to be escaped by crossing the street, hiding behind doors, and rushing blindly into backyards and coal-holes.

The ladies left the room; and I, with Lillian's face glowing bright in my imagination, as the crimson orb remains on the retina of the closed eye, after looking intently at the sun, sat listening to a pleasant

discussion between the dean and the nobleman, about some country in the East, which they had both visited, and greedily devouring all the new facts which they incidentally brought forth out of the treasures of their highly cultivated minds.

I was agreeably surprised (don't laugh, reader) to find that I was allowed to drink water; and that the other men drank not more than a glass or two of wine, after the ladies had retired. I had, somehow, got both lords and deans associated in my mind with infinite swillings of port wine, and bacchanalian orgies, and sat down at first, in much fear and trembling, lest I should be compelled to join, under penalties of salt-and-water; but I had made up my mind, stoutly, to bear anything rather than get drunk; and so I had all the merit of a temperance martyr, without any of its disagreeables.

"Well," said I to myself, smiling in spirit, "what would my Chartist friends say if they saw me here? Not even Crossthwaite himself could find a flaw in the appreciation of merit for its own sake, the courtesy and condescension—ah! but he would complain of it, simply for being condescension." But, after all, what else could it be? Were not these men more experienced, more learned, older than myself? They were my superiors; it was in vain for me to attempt to hide it from myself. But the wonder was, that they themselves were the ones to appear utterly unconscious of it. They treated me as an equal; they welcomed me—the young viscount and the learned dean—on

the broad ground of a common humanity; as I believe hundreds more of their class would do, if we did not ourselves take a pride in estranging them from us—telling them that fraternisation between our classes is impossible, and then cursing them for not fraternising with us.] But of that, more hereafter.

At all events, now my bliss was perfect. No! I was wrong—a higher enjoyment than all awaited me, when, going into the drawing-room, I found Lillian singing at the piano. I had no idea that music was capable of expressing and conveying emotions so intense and ennobling. My experience was confined to street music, and to the bawling at the chapel. And, as yet, Mr. Hullah had not risen into a power more enviable than that of kings, and given to every workman a free entrance into the magic world of harmony and melody, where he may prove his brotherhood with Mozart and Weber, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Great unconscious demagogue!—leader of the people, and labourer in the cause of divine equality!—thy reward is with the Father of the people!

The luscious softness of the Italian airs overcame me with a delicious enervation. Every note, every interval, each shade of expression spoke to me—I knew not what: and yet they spoke to my heart of hearts. A spirit out of the infinite heaven seemed calling to my spirit, which longed to answer—and was dumb—and could only vent itself in tears, which welled unconsciously forth, and eased my heart from the painful tension of excitement.

. . . . .

"Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers,
O'ershadowing it with soft and thrilling wings;
The blood and life within those snowy fingers
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
My brain is wild, my breath comes quick,
The blood is listening in my frame;
And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
Fall on my overflowing eyes.
My heart is quivering like a flame;
As morning-dew that in the sunbeam dies,
I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies."

. . . . .

The dark lady, [redacted], as I ought to call her, saw my emotion, and as I thought unkindly, checked the cause of it at once.

"Pray do not give us any more of those die-away Italian airs, Lillian. Sing something manful, German or English, or anything you like, except those sentimental wailings."

Lillian stopped, took another book, and commenced, after a short prelude, one of my own songs. Surprise and pleasure overpowered me more utterly than the soft southern melodies had done. I was on the point of springing up and leaving the room, when my raptures were checked by our host, who turned round, and stopped short in an oration on the geology of Upper Egypt.

"What's that about brotherhood and freedom, Lillian? We don't want anything of that kind here."

"It's only a popular London song, papa," answered she with an arch smile.

"Or likely to become so," added Miss Staunton, in her marked dogmatic tone.

"I am very sorry for London, then." And he returned to the deserts.

The Dean discusses Alton's educational possibilities, and sets him to some scientific tasks.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAN OF SCIENCE.

Sc. XXVII.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, Lillian retired, saying laughingly, that she must go and see after her clothing club and her dear old woman at the almshouse, which, of course, made me look on her as more an angel than ever. And while George was left with Lord Lynedale, I was summoned to a private conference with the dean, in his study.

I found him in a room lined with cabinets of curiosities, and hung all over with strange horns, bones, and slabs of fossils. But I was not allowed much time to look about me; for he commenced at once on the subject of my studies, by asking me whether I was willing to prepare myself for the university, by entering on the study of mathematics?

I felt so intense a repugnance to them, that at the risk of offending him—perhaps for what I knew, fatally—I dared to demur. He smiled—

"I am convinced, young man, that even if you intended to follow poetry as a profession—and a very poor one you will find it—yet you will never attain to any excellence therein, without far stricter mental

discipline than any to which you have been accustomed. That is why I abominate our modern poets. They talk about the glory of the poetic vocation, as if they intended to be kings and world-makers, and all the while they indulge themselves in the most loose and desultory habits of thought. Sir, if they really believed their own grandiloquent assumptions, they would feel that the responsibility of their mental training was greater, not less, than any one's else. Like the Quakers, they fancy that they honour inspiration by supposing it to be only extraordinary and paroxysmic: the true poet, like the rational Christian, believing that inspiration is continual and orderly, that it reveals harmonious laws, not merely excites sudden emotions. You understand me?"

I did, tolerably; and subsequent conversations with him fixed the thoughts sufficiently in my mind, to make me pretty sure that I am giving a faithful verbal transcript of them.

"You must study some science. Have you read any logic?"

I mentioned Watts' "Logic," and Locke "On the Use of the Understanding"—two books well known to reading artisans.

"Ah," he said, "such books are very well, but they are merely popular. 'Aristotle,' 'Ritter on Induction,' and Kant's 'Prolegomena' and 'Logic'—when you had read them some seven or eight times over, you might consider yourself as knowing somewhat about the matter."

"I have read a little about induction in Whately."

"Ah, very good book, but popular. Did you find that your method of thought received any benefit from it?"

"The truth is—I do not know whether I can quite express myself clearly—but logic, like mathematics, seems to tell me too little about things. It does not enlarge my knowledge of man or nature; and those are what I thirst for. [And you must remember—I hope I am not wrong in saying it—that the case of a man of your class, who has the power of travelling, of reading what he will, and seeing what he will, is very different from that of an artisan, whose chances of observation are so sadly limited. You must forgive us, if we are unwilling to spend our time over books which tell us nothing about the great universe outside the shop-windows."]

He smiled compassionately. "Very true, my boy. There are two branches of study, then, before you, and by either of them a competent subsistence is possible, with good interest. Philology is one. But before you could arrive at those depths in it which connect with ethnology, history, and geography, you would require a lifetime of study. There remains yet another. I see you stealing glances at those natural curiosities. In the study of them, you would find, as I believe, more and more daily, a mental discipline superior even to that which language or mathematics give. [If I had been blest with a son—but that is neither here nor there—it was my intention to have

educated him almost entirely as a naturalist. I think I should like to try the experiment on a young man like yourself."

Sandy Mackaye's definition of legislation for the masses, "Fiat experimentum in corpore vili," rose up in my thoughts, and, half unconsciously, passed my lips. The good old man only smiled.

"That is not my reason, Mr. Locke. I should choose, by preference, a man of your class for experiments, not because the nature is coarser, or less precious in the scale of creation, but because I have a notion, for which, like many others, I have been very much laughed at, that you are less sophisticated, more simple and fresh from nature's laboratory, than the young persons of the upper classes, who begin from the nursery to be more or less trimmed up, and painted over by the artificial state of society—a very excellent state, mind, Mr. Locke. Civilisation is, next to Christianity of course, the highest blessing; but not so good a state for trying anthropological experiments on."

I assured him of my great desire to be the subject of such an experiment; and was encouraged by his smile to tell him something about my intense love for natural objects, the mysterious pleasure which I had taken, from my boyhood, in trying to classify them, and my visits to the British Museum, for the purpose of getting at some general knowledge of the natural groups.

"Excellent," he said, "young man; the very best

sign I have yet seen in you. And what have you read on these subjects?"

I mentioned several books: Bingley, Bewick, "Humboldt's Travels," "The Voyage of the Beagle," various scattered articles in the Penny and Saturday Magazines, etc. etc.

"Ah!" he said, "popular—you will find, if you will allow me to give you my experience——"

I assured him that I was only too much honoured —and I truly felt so. I knew myself to be in the presence of my rightful superior—my master on that very point of education which I idolised. Every sentence which he spoke gave me fresh light on some matter or other; and I felt a worship for him, totally irrespective of any vulgar and slavish respect for his rank or wealth. The working man has no want for real reverence. Mr. Carlyle's being a "gentleman" has not injured his influence with the people. On the contrary, it is the artisan's intense longing to find his real *lords* and guides, which makes him despise and execrate his sham ones. Whereof let society take note.

"Then," continued he, "your plan is to take up some one section of the subject, and thoroughly exhaust that. Universal laws manifest themselves only by particular instances. They say, man is the microcosm, Mr. Locke; but the man of science finds every worm and beetle a microcosm in its way. It exemplifies, directly or indirectly, every physical law in the universe, though it may not be two lines long. It is

not only a part, but a mirror, of the great whole. It has a definite relation to the whole world, and the whole world has a relation to it. Really, by-the-by, I cannot give you a better instance of what I mean, than in my little diatribe on the Geryon Trifurcifer, a small reptile which I found, some years ago, inhabiting the mud of the salt lakes of Balkhan, which fills up a long-desired link between the Chelonia and the Perenni branchiate Batrachians, and, as I think, though Professor Brown differs from me, connects both with the Herbivorous Cetacea.—Professor Brown is an exceedingly talented man, but a little too cautious in accepting any one's theories but his own. There it is," he said, as he drew out of a drawer a little pamphlet of some thirty pages—"an old man's darling. I consider that book the outcome of thirteen years' labour."

"It must be very deep," I replied, "to have been worth such long-continued study."

"Oh! science is her own reward. There is hardly a great physical law which I have not brought to bear on the subject of that one small animal; and above all—what is in itself worth a life's labour—I have, I believe, discovered two entirely new laws of my own, though one of them, by-the-by, has been broached by Professor Brown since, in his lectures. He might have mentioned my name in connection with the subject, for I certainly imparted my ideas to him, two years at least before the delivery of those lectures of his. Professor Brown is a very great man, certainly,

and a very good man, but not quite so original as is generally supposed. Still, a scientific man must expect his little disappointments and injustices. If you were behind the scenes in the scientific world, I can assure you, you would find as much party-spirit, and unfairness, and jealousy, and emulation there, as anywhere else. Human nature, human nature, everywhere!"

I said nothing, but thought the more; and took the book, promising to study it carefully.

"There is Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom,' and a dictionary of scientific terms to help you; and mind, it must be got up thoroughly, for I purpose to set you an examination or two in it, a few days hence. Then I shall find out whether you know what is worth all the information in the world."

"What is that, sir?"

"The art of getting information, *artem discendi*, Mr. Locke, wherewith the world is badly provided just now, as it is overstocked with the *artem legendi*—the knack of running the eye over books, and fancying that it understands them, because it can talk about them. You cannot play that trick with my Geryon Trifurcifer, I assure you; he is as dry and tough as his name. But believe me, he is worth mastering, not because he is mine, but simply because he is tough."

I promised all diligence.

"Very good. And be sure, if you intend to be a poet for these days (and I really think you have some

faculty for it), you must become a scientific man. Science has made vast strides, and introduced entirely new modes of looking at nature, and poets must live up to the age. I never read a word of Goethe's verse, but I am convinced that he must be the great poet of the day, just because he is the only one who has taken the trouble to go into the details of practical science. And, in the mean time, I will give you a lesson myself. I see you are longing to know the contents of these cabinets. You shall assist me by writing out the names of this lot of shells, just come from Australia, which I am now going to arrange."

I set to work at once, under his directions; and passed that morning, and the two or three following, delightfully. [But I question whether the good dean would have been well satisfied, had he known how all his scientific teaching confirmed my democratic opinions. [The mere fact, that I could understand these things when they were set before me, as well as any one else, was to me a simple demonstration of the equality in worth, and therefore in privilege, of all classes.] It may be answered, that I had no right to argue from myself to the mob; and that other working geniuses have no right to demand universal enfranchisment for their whole class, just because they, the exceptions, are fit for it. But surely it is hard to call such an error, if it be one, "the insolent assumption of democratic conceit," etc. etc. Does it not look more like the humility of men who are unwilling to assert for themselves peculiar excellence,

peculiar privileges; who, like the apostles of old, want no glory, save that which they can share with the outcast and the slave! Let society, among other matters, take note of that.]

S. (see p. 17)

CHAPTER XVI.

CULTIVATED WOMEN.

I WAS thus brought in contact, for the first time in my life, with two exquisite specimens of cultivated womanhood; and they naturally, as the reader may well suppose, almost entirely engrossed my thoughts and interest.

Lillian, for so I must call her, became daily more and more agreeable; and tried, as I fancied, to draw me out, and show me off to the best advantage; whether from the desire of pleasing herself, or pleasing me, I know not, and do not wish to know—but the consequences to my boyish vanity were such as are more easy to imagine, than pleasant to describe. Miss Staunton, on the other hand, became, I thought, more and more unpleasant; not that she, ever for a moment, outstepped the bounds of the most perfect courtesy; but her manner, which was soft to no one except to Lord Lynedale, was, when she spoke to me, especially dictatorial and abrupt. She seemed to make a point of carping at chance words of mine, and of setting me down suddenly, by breaking in with some severe, pithy observation, on conversations to

which she had been listening unobserved. She seemed, too, to view with dislike anything like cordiality between me and Lillian—a dislike, which I was actually at moments vain enough (such a creature is man!) to attribute to—jealousy!!! till I began to suspect and hate her, as a proud, harsh, and exclusive aristocrat. And my suspicion and hatred received their confirmation, when, one morning, after an evening even more charming than usual, Lillian came down, reserved, peevish, all but sulky, and showed that that bright heaven of sunny features had room in it for a cloud, and that an ugly one. But I, poor fool, only pitied her, made up my mind that some one had ill-used her; and looked on her as a martyr—perhaps to that harsh cousin of hers.

That day was taken up with writing out answers to the dean's searching questions on his pamphlet, in which, I believe, I acquitted myself tolerably; and he seemed far more satisfied with my commentary than I was with his text. He seemed to ignore utterly anything like religion, or even the very notion of God, in his chains of argument. Nature was spoken of as the willer and producer of all the marvels which he describes; and every word in the book, to my astonishment, might have been written just as easily by an Atheist as by a dignitary of the Church of England.

I could not help, that evening, hinting this defect, as delicately as I could, to my good host, and was somewhat surprised to find that he did not consider it a defect at all.

(Reconciliation needed between religion and science.)

See I. 332

"I am in no wise anxious to weaken the antithesis between natural and revealed religion. Science may help the former, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the latter. She stands on her own ground, has her own laws, and is her own reward. Christianity is a matter of faith and of the teaching of the Church. It must not go out of its way for science, and science must not go out of her way for it; and where they seem to differ, it is our duty to believe that they are reconciliable by fuller knowledge, but not to clip truth in order to make it match with doctrine."

"Mr. Carlyle," said Miss Staunton, in her abrupt way, "can see that the God of Nature is the God of man."

"Nobody denies that, my dear."

"Except in every word and action; else why do they not write about Nature as if it was the expression of a living, loving spirit, not merely a dead machine?"

"It may be very easy, my dear, for a Deist like Mr. Carlyle to see *his* God in Nature; but if he would accept the truths of Christianity, he would find that there were deeper mysteries in them than trees and animals can explain."

"Pardon me, sir," I said, "but I think that a very large portion of thoughtful working men agree with you, though, in their case, that opinion has only increased their difficulties about Christianity. They complain that they cannot identify the God of the Bible with the God of the world around them; and

one of their great complaints against Christianity is, that it demands assent to mysteries which are independent of, and even contradictory to, the laws of Nature."

The old man was silent.

"Mr. Carlyle is no Deist," said Miss Staunton; "and I am sure, that unless the truths of Christianity contrive soon to get themselves justified by the laws of science, the higher orders will believe in them as little as Mr. Locke informs us that the working classes do."

"You prophesy confidently, my darling."

"Oh, Eleanor is in one of her prophetic moods to-night," said Lillian, slily. "She has been foretelling me I know not what misery and misfortune, just because I choose to amuse myself in my own way."

And she gave another sly pouting look at Eleanor, and then called me to look over some engravings, chatting over them so charmingly!—and stealing, every now and then, a pretty, saucy look at her cousin, which seemed to say, "I shall do what I like in spite of your predictions."

This confirmed my suspicions that Eleanor had been trying to separate us; and the suspicion received a further corroboration, indirect, and perhaps very unfair, from the lecture which I got from my cousin after I went upstairs.

He had been flattering me very much lately about "the impression" I was making on the family, and tormenting me by compliments on the clever way in

which I "played my cards;" and when I denied indignantly any such intention, patting me on the back, and laughing me down in a knowing way, as much as to say that he was not to be taken in by my professions of simplicity. He seemed to judge every one by himself, and to have no notion of any middle characters between the mere green-horn and the deliberate schemer. But to-night, after commencing with the usual compliments, he went on:

"Now, first let me give you one hint, and be thankful for it. Mind your game with that Eleanor —Miss Staunton. She is a regular tyrant, I happen to know: a strong-minded woman with a vengeance. She manages every one here; and unless you are in her good books, don't expect to keep your footing in this house, my boy. So just mind and pay her a little more attention and Miss Lillian a little less. After all, it is worth the trouble. She is uncommonly well read; and says confounded clever things, too, when she wakes up out of the sulks; and you may pick up a wrinkle or two from her, worth pocketing. You mind what she says to you. You know she is going to be married to Lord Lynedale."

I nodded assent.

"Well, then, if you want to hook him, you must secure her first."

"I want to hook no one, George; I have told you that a thousand times."

"Oh no! certainly not—by no means! Why should you?" said the artful dodger. And he swung,

laughing, out of the room, leaving in my mind a strange suspicion, of which I was ashamed, though I could not shake it off, that he had remarked Eleanor's wish to cool my admiration for Lillian, and was willing, for some purpose of his own, to further that wish. The truth is, I had very little respect for him, or trust in him; and I was learning to look, habitually, for some selfish motive in all he said or did. Perhaps, if I had acted more boldly upon what I did see, I should not have been here now.

CHAPTER XVII.

SERMONS IN STONES.

THE next afternoon was the last but one of my stay at D * * *. We were to dine late, after sunset, and, before dinner, we went into the cathedral. The choir had just finished practising. Certain exceedingly ill-looking men, whose faces bespoke principally sensuality and self-conceit, and whose function was that of praising God, on the sole qualification of good bass and tenor voices, were coming chattering through the choir gates; and behind them a group of small boys were suddenly transforming themselves from angels into sinners, by tearing off their white surplices, and pinching and poking each other noisily as they passed us, with as little reverence as Voltaire himself could have desired.

I had often been in the cathedral before—indeed, we attended the service daily, and I had been appalled, rather than astonished, by what I saw and heard: the unintelligible service—the irreverent gabble of the choristers and readers—the scanty congregation—the meagre portion of the vast building which seemed to be turned to any use: but never more than that even-

ing, did I feel the desolateness, the doleful inutility, of that vast desert nave, with its aisles and transepts —built for some purpose or other now extinct. The whole place seemed to crush and sadden me; and I could not re-echo Lillian's remark:

"How those pillars, rising story above story, and those lines of pointed arches, all lead the eye heavenward! It is a beautiful notion, that about pointed architecture being symbolic of Christianity."

"I ought to be very much ashamed of my stupidity," I answered; "but I cannot feel that, though I believe I ought to do so. That vast groined roof, with its enormous weight of hanging stone, seems to crush one—to bar out the free sky above. Those pointed windows, too—how gloriously the western sun is streaming through them! but their rich hues only dim and deface its light. I can feel what you say, when I look at the cathedral on the outside; there, indeed, every line sweeps the eye upward—carries it from one pinnacle to another, each with less and less standing-ground, till at the summit the building gradually vanishes in a point, and leaves the spirit to wing its way, unsupported and alone, into the ether. Perhaps," I added, half-bitterly, "these cathedrals may be true symbols of the superstition which created them—on the outside, offering to enfranchise the soul and raise it up to heaven; but when the dupes had entered, giving them only a dark prison, and a crushing bondage, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear."

"You may sneer at them, if you will, Mr. Locke," said Eleanor, in her severe, abrupt way. "The working classes would have been badly off without them. They were, in their day, the only democratic institution in the world; and the only socialist one too. The only chance a poor man had of rising by his worth, was by coming to the monastery. And bitterly the working classes felt the want of them, when they fell. Your own Cobbett can tell you that."

"Ah," said Lillian, "how different it must have been four hundred years ago!—how solemn and picturesque those old monks must have looked, gliding about the aisles!—and how magnificent the choir must have been, before all the glass and carving, and that beautiful shrine of St. * * * *, blazing with gold and jewels, were all plundered and defaced by those horrid Puritans!"

"Say, reformer-squires," answered Eleanor; "for it was they who did the thing; only it was found convenient, at the Restoration, to lay on the people of the seventeenth century the iniquities which the country-gentlemen committed in the sixteenth."

"Surely," I added, emboldened by her words, "if the monasteries were what their admirers say, some method of restoring the good of the old system, without its evil, ought to be found; and would be found, if it were not——" I paused, recollecting whose guest I was.

"If it were not, I suppose," said Eleanor, "for

those lazy, overfed, bigoted hypocrites, the clergy. That, I presume, is the description of them to which you have been most accustomed.] Now, let me ask you one question. Do you mean to condemn, just now, the Church as it was, or the Church as it is, or the Church as it ought to be? Radicals have a habit of confusing those three questions, as they have of confusing other things when it suits them."

["Really," I said—for my blood was rising—"I do think that, with the confessed enormous wealth of the clergy, the cathedral establishments especially, they might do more for the people."]

["Listen to me a little, Mr. Locke. The laity now-a-days take a pride in speaking evil of the clergy, never seeing that if they are bad, the laity have made them so. Why, what do you impute to them? Their worldliness, their being like the world, like the laity round them—like you, in short? Improve yourselves, and by so doing, if there is this sad tendency in the clergy to imitate you, you will mend them; if you do not find that, after all, it is they who will have to mend you. 'As with the people, so with the priest,' is the everlasting law. When, fifty years ago, all classes were drunkards, from the statesman to the peasant, the clergy were drunken also, but not half so bad as the laity. Now the laity are eaten up with covetousness and ambition; and the clergy are covetous and ambitious, but not half so bad as the laity. The laity, and you working men especially, are the dupes of frothy, insincere, official rant, as Mr. Carlyle would

call it, in Parliament, on the hustings, at every debating society and Chartist meeting; and, therefore, the clergyman's sermons are apt to be just what people like elsewhere, and what, therefore, they suppose people will like there."

"If, then," I answered, "in spite of your opinions, you confess the clergy to be so bad, why are you so angry with men of our opinions, if we do plot sometimes a little against the Church?"

"I do not think you know what my opinions are, Mr. Locke. Did you not hear me just now praising the monasteries, because they were socialist and democratic? But why is the badness of the clergy any reason for pulling down the Church? That is another of the confused irrationalities into which you all allow yourselves to fall. What do you mean by crying shame on a man for being a bad clergyman, if a good clergyman is not a good thing? If the very idea of a clergyman was abominable, as your Church-destroyers ought to say, you ought to praise a man for being a bad one, and not acting out this same abominable idea of priesthood. Your very outcry against the sins of the clergy, shows that, even in your minds, a dim notion lies somewhere that a clergyman's vocation is, in itself, a divine, a holy, a beneficent one."

"I never looked at it in that light, certainly," said I, somewhat staggered.

"Very likely not. One word more, for I may not have another opportunity of speaking to you as I would on these matters. You working men complain

of the clergy for being bigoted and obscurantist, and hating the cause of the people. Does not nine-tenths of the blame of that lie at your door? I took up, the other day, at hazard, one of your favourite liberty-preaching newspapers; and I saw books advertised in it, whose names no modest woman should ever behold; doctrines and practices advocated in it from which all the honesty, the decency, the common human feeling which is left in the English mind, ought to revolt, and does revolt. You cannot deny it. Your class has told the world that the cause of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the cause which the working masses claim as theirs, identifies itself with blasphemy and indecency, with the tyrannous persecutions of trades-unions, with robbery, assassinations, vitriol-bottles, and midnight incendiarism. And then you curse the clergy for taking you at your word! Whatsoever they do, you attack them. If they believe you, and stand up for common morality, and for the truths which they know are all-important to poor as well as rich, you call them bigots and persecutors; while if they neglect, in any way, the very Christianity for believing which you insult them, you turn round and call them hypocrites. Mark my words, Mr. Locke, till you gain the respect and confidence of the clergy, you will never rise. The day will come when you will find that the clergy are the only class who can help you. Ah, you may shake your head. I warn you of it. They were the only bulwark of the poor against the mediæval tyranny of Rank; you will find

them the only bulwark against the modern tyranny of Mammom."

I was on the point of entreating her to explain herself further, but at that critical moment Lillian interposed.

"Now, stay your prophetic glances into the future; here come Lynedale and papa." And in a moment Eleanor's whole manner and countenance altered—the petulant, wild unrest, the harsh, dictatorial tone vanished; and she turned to meet her lover, with a look of tender, satisfied devotion, which transfigured her whole face. It was most strange, the power he had over her. His presence, even at a distance, seemed to fill her whole being with rich quiet life. She watched him with folded hands, like a mystic worshipper, waiting for the afflatus of the spirit; and, suspicious and angry as I felt towards her, I could not help being drawn to her by this revelation of depths of strong healthy feeling, of which her usual manner gave so little sign.

This conversation thoroughly puzzled me; it showed me that there might be two sides to the question of the people's cause, as well as to that of others. It shook a little my faith in the infallibility of my own class, to hear such severe animadversions on them, from a person who professed herself as much a disciple of Carlyle as any working man; and who evidently had no lack either of intellect to comprehend or boldness to speak out his doctrines; who could praise the old monasteries for being democratic and socialist, and

A stop discourses to the family party on dress and on the tailor's life.

spoke far more severely of the clergy than I could have done—because she did not deal merely in trite words of abuse, but showed a real analytic insight into the causes of their short-coming.

. . . . .

Sc. XXX.

Carlyle Saunton

That same evening the conversation happened to turn on dress, of which Miss Staunton spoke scornfully and disparagingly, as mere useless vanity and frippery—an empty substitute for real beauty of person as well as the higher beauty of mind. And I, emboldened by the courtesy with which I was always called on to take my share in everything that was said or done, ventured to object, humbly enough, to her notions.

"But is not beauty," I said, "in itself a good and blessed thing, softening, refining, rejoicing the eyes of all who behold?" (And my eyes, as I spoke, involuntarily rested on Lillian's face—who saw it, and blushed.) "Surely nothing which helps beauty is to be despised. And, without the charm of dress, beauty, even that of expression, does not really do itself justice. How many lovely and lovable faces there are, for instance, among the working classes, which, if they had but the advantages which ladies possess, might create delight, respect, chivalrous worship in the beholder—but are now never appreciated, because they have not the same fair means of displaying themselves which even the savage girl of the South Sea Islands possesses!"

Lillian said it was so very true—she had really

never thought of it before—and somehow I gained courage to go on.

"Besides, dress is a sort of sacrament, if I may use the word—a sure sign of the wearer's character; according as any one is orderly, or modest, or tasteful, or joyous, or brilliant"—and I glanced again at Lillian —"those excellences, or the want of them, are sure to show themselves, in the colours they choose, and the cut of their garments. In the workroom, I and a friend of mine used often to amuse ourselves over the clothes we were making, by speculating from them on the sort of people the wearers were to be; and I fancy we were not often wrong."

My cousin looked daggers at me, and for a moment I fancied I had committed a dreadful mistake in mentioning my tailor-life. So I had in his eyes, but not in those of the really well-bred persons round me.

"Oh, how very amusing it must have been! I think I shall turn milliner, Eleanor, for the fun of divining every one's little failings from their caps and gowns!"

"Go on, Mr. Locke," said the dean, who had seemed buried in the "Transactions of the Royal Society." "The fact is novel, and I am more obliged to any one who gives me that, than if he gave me a bank-note. The money gets spent and done with; but I cannot spend the fact: it remains for life as permanent capital, returning interest and compound interest *ad infinitum*. By-the-by, tell me about those

same workshops. I have heard more about them than I like to believe true."

And I did tell him all about them; and spoke, my blood rising as I went on, long and earnestly, perhaps eloquently. Now and then I got abashed, and tried to stop; and then the dean informed me that I was speaking well and sensibly, while Lillian entreated me to go on. She had never conceived such things possible—it was as interesting as a novel, etc. etc.; and Miss Staunton sat with compressed lips and frowning brow, apparently thinking of nothing but her book, till I felt quite angry at her apathy—for such it seemed to me to be.

The Dean assures Alton of the publication of his poems if he would withdraw certain "anti aristocratic" phrases.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MY FALL.

AND now the last day of our stay at D * * * had arrived, and I had as yet heard nothing of the prospects of my book; though, indeed, the company in which I had found myself had driven literary ambition, for the time being, out of my head, and bewitched me to float down the stream of daily circumstance, satisfied to snatch the enjoyment of each present moment. That morning, however, after I had fulfilled my daily task of arranging and naming objects of natural history, the dean settled himself back in his arm-chair, and bidding me sit down, evidently meditated a business conversation.

Sc. XXXI.

He had heard from his publisher, and read his letter to me. "The poems were on the whole much liked. The most satisfactory method of publishing for all parties, would be by procuring so many subscribers, each agreeing to take so many copies. In consideration of the dean's known literary judgment and great influence, the publisher would, as a private favour, not object to take the risk of any further expenses."

So far everything sounded charming. The method

was not a very independent one, but it was the only one; and I should actually have the delight of having published a volume. But, alas! "he thought that the sale of the book might be greatly facilitated, if certain passages of a strong political tendency were omitted. He did not wish personally to object to them as statements of facts, or to the pictorial vigour with which they were expressed; but he thought that they were somewhat too strong for the present state of the public taste; and though he should be the last to allow any private considerations to influence his weak patronage of rising talent, yet, considering his present connection, he should hardly wish to take on himself the responsibility of publishing such passages, unless with great modifications."

"You see," said the good old man, "the opinion of respectable practical men, who know the world, exactly coincides with mine. I did not like to tell you that I could not help in the publication of your MSS. in their present state; but I am sure, from the modesty and gentleness which I have remarked in you, your readiness to listen to reason, and your pleasing freedom from all violence or coarseness in expressing your opinions, that you will not object to so exceedingly reasonable a request, which, after all, is only for your good. Ah! young man," he went on, in a more feeling tone than I had yet heard, from him, "if you were once embroiled in that political world, of which you know so little, you would soon be crying like David, 'Oh that I had wings like a

dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!' Do you fancy that you can alter a fallen world? What it is, it always has been, and will be to the end. Every age has its political and social nostrums, my dear young man, and fancies them infallible; and the next generation arises to curse them as failures in practice, and superstitious in theory, and try some new nostrum of its own."

I sighed.

"Ah! you may sigh. But we have each of us to be disenchanted of our dream. There was a time once when I talked republicanism as loudly as raw youth ever did—when I had an excuse for it, too; for when I was a boy, I saw the French Revolution; and it was no wonder if young, enthusiastic brains were excited by all sorts of wild hopes—'perfectibility of the species,' 'rights of man,' 'universal liberty, equality, and brotherhood.'—My dear sir, there is nothing new under the sun; all that is stale and trite to a septuagenarian, who has seen where it all ends. I speak to you freely, because I am deeply interested in you. I feel that this is the important question of your life, and that you have talents, the possession of which is a heavy responsibility. Eschew politics, once and for all, as I have done. I might have been, I may tell you, a bishop at this moment, if I had condescended to meddle again in those party questions of which my youthful experience sickened me. But I knew that I should only weaken my own influence, as that most noble and excellent man, Dr. Arnold,

did, by interfering in politics.' [The poet, like the clergyman and the philosopher, has nothing to do with politics. Let them choose the better part, and it shall not be taken from them. The world may rave," he continued, waxing eloquent as he approached his favourite subject—"the world may rave, but in the study there is quiet. The world may change, Mr. Locke, and will; but 'the earth abideth for ever.' Solomon had seen somewhat of politics, and social improvement, and so on; and behold, then, as now, 'all was vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? The thing which hath been, it is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun. One generation passeth away, and another cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.' No wonder that the wisest of men took refuge from such experience, as I have tried to do, in talking of all herbs, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth on the wall!

"Ah! Mr. Locke," he went on, in a soft melancholy, half-abstracted tone—"ah! Mr. Locke, I have felt deeply, and you will feel some day, the truth of Jarno's saying in 'Wilhelm Meister,' when he was wandering alone in the Alps, with his geological hammer, 'These rocks, at least, tell me no lies, as men do.' Ay, there is no lie in Nature, no discord in the revelations of science, in the laws of the universe. Infinite, pure, unfallen, earth-supporting Titans, fresh

as on the morning of creation, those great laws endure; your only true democrats, too—for nothing is too great or too small for them to take note of. No tiniest gnat, or speck of dust, but they feed it, guide it, and preserve it.—Hail and snow, wind and vapour, fulfilling their Maker's word; and like him, too, hiding themselves from the wise and prudent, and revealing themselves unto babes. Yes, Mr. Locke; it is the childlike, simple, patient, reverent heart, which science at once demands and cultivates. To prejudice or haste, to self-conceit or ambition, she proudly shuts her treasuries—to open them to men of humble heart, whom this world thinks simple dreamers—her Newtons, and Owens, and Faradays. Why should you not become such a man as they? You have the talents—you have the love for nature, you seem to have the gentle and patient spirit, which, indeed, will grow up more and more in you, if you become a real student of science. Or, if you must be a poet, why not sing of nature, and leave those to sing political squabbles, who have no eye for the beauty of her repose? How few great poets have been politicians!"

I gently suggested Milton.

"Ay! he became a great poet only when he had deserted politics, because they had deserted him. In blindness and poverty, in the utter failure of all his national theories, he wrote the works which have made him immortal. Was Shakespeare a politician? or any one of the great poets who have arisen during the last thirty years? Have they not all seemed to

consider it a sacred duty to keep themselves, as far as they could, out of party strife?"

I quoted Southey, Shelley, and Burns, as instances to the contrary; but his induction was completed already, to his own satisfaction.

["Poor dear Southey was a great verse-maker, rather than a great poet; and I always consider that his party-prejudices and party-writing narrowed and harshened a mind which ought to have been flowing forth freely and lovingly towards all forms of life. And as for Shelley and Burns, their politics dictated to them at once the worst portions of their poetry and of their practice.] [Shelley, what little I have read of him, only seems himself when he forgets radicalism for nature; and you would not set Burns's life or death, either, as a model for imitation in any class.] Now, do you know, I must ask you to leave me a little. I am somewhat fatigued with this long discussion" (in which, certainly, I had borne no great share); "and I am sure, that after all I have said, you will see the propriety of acceding to the publisher's advice. Go and think over it, and let me have your answer by post time."

[I did go and think over it—too long for my good. If I had acted on the first impulse, I should have refused, and been safe. These passages were the very pith and marrow of the poems. They were the very words which I had felt it my duty, my glory, to utter. I, who had been a working man, who had experienced all their sorrows and temptations—I, seemed called by every circumstance of my life to preach their

cause, to expose their wrongs—I to squash my convictions, to stultify my book for the sake of popularity, money, patronage! And yet—all that involved seeing more of Lillian. They were only too powerful inducements in themselves, alas! but I believe I could have resisted them tolerably, if they had not been backed by love. And so a struggle arose, which the rich reader may think a very fantastic one, though the poor man will understand it, and surely pardon it also—seeing that he himself is Man. Could I not, just once in a way, serve God and Mammon at once? —or rather, not Mammon, but Venus: a worship which looked to me, and really was in my case, purer than all the Mariolatry in Popedom. After all, the fall might not be so great as it seemed—perhaps I was not infallible on these same points. (It is wonderful how humble and self-denying one becomes when one is afraid of doing one's duty.) Perhaps the dean might be right. He had been a republican himself once, certainly. The facts, indeed, which I had stated, there could be no doubt of; but I might have viewed them through a prejudiced and angry medium—I might have been not quite logical in my deductions from them—I might—— In short, between "perhapses" and "mights" I fell—a very deep, real, damnable fall; and consented to emasculate my poems, and become a flunkey and a dastard.

I mentioned my consent that evening to the party; the dean purred content thereat. Eleanor, to my astonishment, just said, sternly and abruptly,

"Weak!" and then turned away, while Lillian began:

"Oh! what a pity! And really they were some of the prettiest verses of all! But of course my father must know best; you are quite right to be guided by him, and do whatever is proper and prudent. After all, papa, I have got the naughtiest of them all, you know, safe. Eleanor set it to music, and wrote it out in her book, and I thought it was so charming that I copied it."

What Lillian said about herself I drank in as greedily as usual; what she said about Eleanor fell on a heedless ear, and vanished, not to reappear in my recollection till—— But I must not anticipate.

So it was all settled pleasantly; and I sat up that evening writing a bit of verse for Lillian, about the old Cathedral, and "Heaven-aspiring towers," and "Aisles of cloistered shade," and all that sort of thing; which I did not believe or care for; but I thought it would please her, and so it did; and I got golden smiles and compliments for my first, though not my last, insincere poem. I was going fast down hill, in my hurry to rise. However, as I said, it was all pleasant enough. I was to return to town, and there await the dean's orders; and, most luckily, I had received that morning from Sandy Mackaye a characteristic letter:

"Gowk, Telemachus, hearken! Item 1. Ye're fou wi' the Circean cup, aneath the shade o' shovel hats and steeple houses.

"Item 2. I, cuif-Mentor that I am, wearing out a gude pair o' gude Scots brogues that my sister's husband's third cousin sent me a towmond gane fra Aberdeen, rinning ower the town to a' journals, respectable and ither, anent the sellin o' your 'Autobiography of an Engine-Boiler in the Vauxhall Road,' the whilk I hae disposit o' at the last, to O'Flynn's *Weekly Warwhoop;* and gin ye ha' ony mair sic trash in your head, you may get your meal whiles out o' the same kist; unless, as I sair misdoubt, ye're praying already, like Eli's bairns, 'to be put into ane o' the priest's offices, that ye may eat a piece o' bread.'

"Ye'll be coming the-morrow? I'm lane without ye; though I look for ye surely to come ben wi' a gowd shoulder-knot, and a red nose."

This letter, though it hit me hard, and made me, I confess, a little angry at the moment with my truest friend, still offered me a means of subsistence, and enabled me to decline safely the pecuniary aid which I dreaded the dean's offering me. And yet I felt dispirited and ill at ease. My conscience would not let me enjoy the success I felt I had attained. But next morning I saw Lillian; and I forgot books, people's cause, conscience, and everything.

. . . . .

I went home by coach—a luxury on which my cousin insisted—as he did on lending me the fare; so that in all I owed him somewhat more than eleven pounds. But I was too happy to care for a fresh debt, and home I went, considering my fortune made.

Mrs. Locke dead

My heart fell, as I stepped into the dingy little old shop! Was it the meanness of the place after the comfort and elegance of my late abode? Was it disappointment at not finding Mackaye at home? Or was it that black-edged letter which lay waiting for me on the table. I was afraid to open it; I knew not why. I turned it over and over several times, trying to guess whose the handwriting on the cover might be; the postmark was two days old: and at last I broke the seal.

"Sir—This is to inform you that your mother, Mrs. Locke, died this morning, a sensible sinner, not without assurance of her election: and that her funeral is fixed for Wednesday, the 29th instant.

"The humble servant of the Lord's people,

"J. WIGGINTON."

. . . . . .

Part II.

FEW DAYS

CHAPTER XIX.

SHORT AND SAD.

I SHALL pass over the agonies of the next few days. There is self-excoriation enough and to spare in my story, without dilating on them. They are too sacred to publish, and too painful, alas! even to recall. I write my story, too, as a working man. Of those emotions which are common to humanity, I shall say but little—except when it is necessary to prove that the working man has feelings like the rest of his kind. But those feelings may, in this case, be supplied by the reader's own imagination. Let him represent them to himself as bitter, as remorseful as he will, he will not equal the reality. [True, she had cast me off; but had I not rejoiced in that rejection which should have been my shame? True, I had fed on the hope of some day winning reconciliation, by winning fame; but before the fame had arrived, the reconciliation had become impossible. I had shrunk from going back to her, as I ought to have done, in filial humility, and, therefore, I was not allowed to go back to her in the pride of success.] Heaven knows I had not forgotten her. Night and day I had thought of her

ML.

with prayers and blessings; but I had made a merit of my own love to her—my forgiveness of her, as I dared to call it. I had pampered my conceit with a notion that I was a martyr in the cause of genius and enlightenment. How hollow, windy, heartless, all that looked now. There! I will say no more. Heaven preserve any who read these pages from such days and nights as I dragged on till that funeral, and for weeks after it was over, when I had sat once more in the little old chapel, with all the memories of my childhood crowding up, and tantalising me with the vision of their simple peace—never, never, to return! I heard my mother's dying pangs, her prayers, her doubts, her agonies, for my reprobate soul, dissected for the public good by my old enemy, Mr. Wigginton, who dragged in among his fulsome eulogies of my mother's "signs of grace," rejoicings that there were "babes span-long in hell." I saw my sister Susan, now a tall handsome woman, but become all rigid, sour, with coarse grim lips, and that crushed, self-conscious, reserved, almost dishonest look about the eyes, common to fanatics of every creed. I heard her cold farewell, as she put into my hands certain notes and diaries of my mother's, which she had bequeathed to me on her death-bed. I heard myself proclaimed inheritor of some small matters of furniture, which had belonged to her; told Susan carelessly to keep them for herself; and went forth, fancying that the curse of Cain was on my brow.

I took home the diary; but several days elapsed

before I had courage to open it. Let the words I read there be as secret as the misery which dictated them. I had broken my mother's heart!—no! I had not!—[The infernal superstition which taught her to fancy that Heaven's love was narrower than her own—that God could hate his creature, not for its sins, but for the very nature which he had given it—that, that had killed her.]

And I remarked too, with a gleam of hope, that in several places where sunshine seemed ready to break through the black cloud of fanatic gloom—where she seemed inclined not merely to melt towards me (for there was, in every page, an under-current of love deeper than death, and stronger than the grave), but also to dare to trust God on my behalf—[whole lines carefully erased page after page torn out, evidently long after the MSS. were written. I believe, to this day, that, either my poor sister or her father-confessor was the perpetrator of that act.] The *fraus pia* is not yet extinct; and it is as inconvenient now as it was in popish times, to tell the whole truth about saints, when they dare to say or do things which will not quite fit into the formulæ of their sect.

But what was to become of Susan? Though my uncle continued to her the allowance which he had made to my mother, yet I was her natural protector—and she was my only tie upon earth. Was I to lose her, too? Might we not, after all, be happy together, in some little hole in Chelsea, like Elia and his Bridget? That question was solved for me. She

declined my offers; saying, that she could not live with any one whose religious opinions differed from her own, and that she had already engaged a room at the house of a Christian friend; and was shortly to be united to that dear man of God, Mr. Wigginton, who was to be removed to the work of the Lord in Manchester.

[I knew the scoundrel, but it would have been impossible for me to undeceive her. Perhaps he was only a scoundrel—perhaps he would not ill-treat her.] And yet—my own little Susan! my play-fellow! my only tie on earth!—to lose her—and not only her, but her respect, her love!—And my spirit, deep enough already, sank deeper still into sadness; and I felt myself alone on earth, and clung to Mackaye as to a father—and a father indeed that old man was to me.

Wig.

CHAPTER XX.

PEGASUS IN HARNESS.

BUT, in sorrow or in joy, I had to earn my bread; and so too, had Crossthwaite, poor fellow! How he contrived to feed himself and his little Katie for the next few years is more than I can tell; at all events he worked hard enough. [He scribbled, agitated, ran from London to Manchester, and Manchester to Bradford, spouting, lecturing—sowing the east wind, I am afraid, and little more.] Whose fault was it? What could such a man do, with that fervid tongue, and heart, and brain of his, in such a station as his, such a time as this? [Society had helped to make him an agitator. Society has had, more or less, to take the consequences of her own handiwork.] For Crossthwaite did not speak without hearers. He could make the fierce, shrewd, artisan nature flash out into fire—not always celestial, nor always, either, infernal. So he agitated and lived—how, I know not. That he did do so, is evident from the fact that he and Katie are at this moment playing chess in the cabin, before my eyes, and making love, all the while, as if they had not been married a week. . . . Ah, well!

I, however, had to do more than get my bread; I had to pay off these fearful eleven pounds odd, which, now that all the excitement of my stay at D * * * had been so sadly quenched, lay like lead upon my memory. My list of subscribers filled slowly, and I had no power of increasing it by any canvassings of my own. My uncle, indeed, had promised to take two copies, and my cousin one; not wishing, of course, to be so uncommercial as to run any risk, before they had seen whether my poems would succeed. But, with those exceptions, the dean had it all his own way; and he could not be expected to forego his own literary labours for my sake; so, through all that glaring summer, and sad foggy autumn, and nipping winter, I had to get my bread as I best could—by my pen. Mackaye grumbled at my writing so much, and so fast, and sneered about the *furor scribendi*. But it was hardly fair upon me. "My mouth craved it of me," as Solomon says. I had really no other means of livelihood. Even if I could have gotten employment as a tailor, in the honourable trade, I loathed the business utterly—perhaps, alas! to confess the truth, I was beginning to despise it. I could bear to think of myself as a poor genius, in connection with my new wealthy and high-bred patrons; for there was precedent for the thing. Penniless bards and squires of low degree, low-born artists, ennobled by their pictures—there was something grand in the notion of mind triumphant over the inequalities of rank, and associating with the great and wealthy as

their spiritual equal, on the mere footing of its own innate nobility; no matter to what den it might return, to convert it into a temple of the Muses, by the glorious creations of its fancy, etc. etc. But to go back daily from the drawing-room and the publisher's to the goose and the shop-board, was too much for my weakness, even if it had been physically possible, as, thank Heaven, it was not.

So I became a hack-writer, and sorrowfully, but deliberately, "put my Pegasus into heavy harness," as my betters had done before me. It was miserable work, there is no denying it—only not worse than tailoring. To try and serve God and Mammon too; to make miserable compromises daily between the two great incompatibilities, what was true, and what would pay; to speak my mind, in fear and trembling, by hints, and halves, and quarters; to be daily hauling poor Truth just up to the top of the well, and then, frightened at my own success, let her plump down again to the bottom; to sit there trying to teach others, while my mind was in a whirl of doubt; to feed others' intellects while my own were hungering; to grind on in the Philistine's mill, or occasionally make sport for them, like some weary-hearted clown grinning in a pantomime in a "light article," as blind as Samson, but not, alas! as strong, for indeed my Delilah of the West-end had clipped my locks, and there seemed little chance of their growing again. That face and that drawing-room flitted before me

from morning till eve, and enervated and distracted my already over-wearied brain.]

I had no time, besides, to concentrate my thoughts sufficiently for poetry; no time to wait for inspiration. From the moment I had swallowed my breakfast, I had to sit scribbling off my thoughts anyhow in prose! [and soon my own scanty stock was exhausted, and I was forced to beg, borrow, and steal notions and facts wherever I could get them. Oh! the misery of having to read, not what I longed to know, but what I thought would pay! to skip page after page of interesting matter, just to pick out a single thought or sentence which could be stitched into my patch-work! and then the still greater misery of seeing the article which I had sent to press a tolerably healthy and lusty bantling, appear in print next week after suffering the inquisition tortures of the editorial censorship, all maimed, and squinting, and one-sided, with the colour rubbed off its poor cheeks, and generally a villainous hang-dog look of ferocity, so different from its birth-smile that I often did not know my own child again!—and then, when I dared to remonstrate, however feebly, to be told, by way of comfort, that the public taste must be consulted! It gave me a hopeful notion of the said taste, certainly; and often and often I groaned in spirit over the temper of my own class, which not only submitted to, but demanded such one-sided bigotry, [illegible], and ferocity, from those who set up as its guides and teachers.]

Mr. O'Flynn, editor of the *Weekly Warwhoop*,

whose white slave I now found myself, was, I am afraid, a pretty faithful specimen of that class, as it existed before the bitter lesson of the 10th of April brought the Chartist working men and the Chartist press to their senses. Thereon sprang up a new race of papers, whose moral tone, whatever may be thought of their political or doctrinal opinions, was certainly not inferior to that of the Whig and Tory press. The *Commonwealth*, the *Standard of Freedom*, the *Plain Speaker*, were reprobates, if to be a Chartist is to be a reprobate; but none except the most one-sided bigots could deny them the praise of a stern morality and a lofty earnestness, a hatred of evil and a craving after good, which would often put to shame many a paper among the oracles of Belgravia and Exeter Hall. [But those were the days of [illegible] and O'Flynn. Not that the man was an unredeemed scoundrel. He was no more profligate, either in his literary or his private morals, than many a man who earns his hundreds, sometimes his thousands, a year, by prophesying smooth things to Mammon, crying in daily leaders "Peace! peace!" when there is no peace, and daubing the rotten walls of careless luxury and self-satisfied covetousness with the untempered mortar of party statistics and garbled foreign news—till "the storm shall fall, and the breaking thereof cometh suddenly in an instant."] Let those of the respectable press who are without sin, cast the first stone at the unrespectable. Many of the latter class, who have been branded as traitors and villains, were single-minded,

earnest, valiant men; and, as for even O'Flynn, and those worse than him, what was really the matter with them was, that they were too honest—they spoke out too much of their whole minds. Bewildered, like Lear, amid the social storm, they had determined, like him, to become "unsophisticated," "to owe the worm no silk, the cat no perfume"—seeing, indeed, that if they had, they could not have paid for them; so they tore off, of their own will, the peacock's feathers of gentility, the sheep's clothing of moderation, even the fig-leaves of decent reticence, and became just what they really were—just what hundreds more would become, who now sit in the high places of the earth, if it paid them as well to be unrespectable as it does to be respectable; if the selfishness and covetousness, bigotry and ferocity, which are in them, and more or less in every man, had happened to enlist them against existing evils, instead of for them. O'Flynn would have been gladly as respectable as they; but, in the first place, he must have starved; and in the second place, he must have lied; for he believed in his own radicalism with his whole soul. There was a ribald sincerity, a frantic courage in the man. He always spoke the truth when it suited him, and very often when it did not. He did see, which is more than all do, that oppression is oppression, and humbug, humbug. He had faced the gallows before now without flinching. He had spouted rebellion in the Birmingham Bullring, and elsewhere, and taken the consequences like a man; while his colleagues left their

dupes to the tender mercies of broadswords and bayonets, and decamped in the disguise of sailors, old women, and dissenting preachers. He had sat three months in Lancaster Castle, the Bastille of England, one day perhaps to fall like that Parisian one, for a libel which he never wrote, because he would not betray his cowardly contributor. He had twice pleaded his own cause, without help of attorney, and showed himself as practised in every law-quibble and practical cheat as if he had been a regularly ordained priest of the blue-bag; and each time, when hunted at last into a corner, had turned valiantly to bay, with wild witty Irish eloquence, "worthy," as the press say of poor misguided Mitchell, "of a better cause." Altogether, a much-enduring Ulysses, unscrupulous, tough-hided, ready to do and suffer anything fair or foul, for what he honestly believed—if a confused, virulent positiveness be worthy of the name "belief"—to be the true and righteous cause.

Those who class all mankind compendiously and comfortably under the two exhaustive species of saints and villains, may consider such a description garbled and impossible. I have seen few men, but never yet met I among those few either perfect saint or perfect villain. I draw men as I have found them—inconsistent, piecemeal, better than their own actions, worse than their own opinions, and poor O'Flynn among the rest. Not that there were no questionable spots in the sun of his fair fame. It was whispered that he had in old times done dirty work for Dublin

Castle bureaucrats—nay, that he had even, in a very hard season, written court poetry for the *Morning Post;* but all these little peccadilloes he carefully veiled in that kindly mist which hung over his youthful years. He had been a medical student, and got plucked, his foes declared, in his examination. He had set up a savings-bank, which broke. He had come over from Ireland, to agitate for "repale" and "rint," and, like a wise man as he was, had never gone back again. He had set up three or four papers in his time, and entered into partnership with every leading democrat in turn; but his papers failed, and he quarrelled with his partners, being addicted to profane swearing and personalities. And now, at last, after Ulyssean wanderings, he had found rest in the office of the *Weekly Warwhoop*, if rest it could be called, that perennial hurricane of plotting, railing, sneering, and bombast, in which he lived, never writing a line, on principle, till he had worked himself up into a passion.

I will dwell no more on so distasteful a subject. Such leaders, let us hope, belong only to the past—to the youthful evil-will and licentiousness of democracy; and as for reviling O'Flynn, or any other of his class, no man has less right than myself, I fear, to cast stones at such as they. I fell as low as almost any, beneath the besetting sins of my class; and shall I take merit to myself, because God has shown me, a little earlier perhaps than to them, somewhat more of the true duties and destinies of The Many? Oh, that

they could see the depths of my affection to them! Oh, that they could see the shame and self-abasement with which, in rebuking their sins, I confess my own! If they are apt to be flippant and bitter, so was I. If they lust to destroy, without knowing what to build up instead, so did I. If they make an almighty idol of that Electoral Reform, which ought to be, and can be, only a preliminary means, and expect final deliverance from "their twenty-thousandth part of a talker in the national palaver," so did I. Unhealthy and noisome as was the literary atmosphere in which I now found myself, it was one to my taste. The very contrast between the peaceful, intellectual luxury which I had just witnessed, and the misery of my class and myself, quickened my delight in it. In bitterness, in sheer envy, I threw my whole soul into it, and spoke evil, and rejoiced in evil. It was so easy to find fault! It pampered my own self-conceit, my own discontent, while it saved me the trouble of inventing remedies. Yes; it was indeed easy to find fault. "The world was all before me, where to choose." In such a disorganised, anomalous, grumbling, party-embittered element as this English society, and its twin pauperism and luxury, I had but to look straight before me to see my prey.

And thus I became daily more and more cynical, fierce, reckless. My mouth was filled with cursing—and too often justly. And all the while, like tens of thousands of my class, I had no man to teach me. Sheep scattered on the hills, we were, that had no

shepherd. What wonder if our bones lay bleaching among rocks and quagmires, and wolves devoured the heritage of God?

Mackaye had nothing positive, after all, to advise or propound. His wisdom was one of apophthegms and maxims, utterly impracticable, too often merely negative, as was his creed, which, though he refused to be classed with any sect, was really a somewhat undefined Unitarianism—or rather Islamism. He could say, with the old Moslem, "God is great—who hath resisted his will?" And he believed what he said, and lived manful and pure, reverent and self-denying, by that belief, as the first Moslem did. But that was not enough.

"Not enough? Merely negative?"

No—*that* was positive enough, and mighty; but I repeat it, it was not enough. He felt it so himself; for he grew daily more and more cynical, more and more hopeless about the prospects of his class and of all humanity. Why not? Poor suffering wretches! what is it to them to know that "God is great," unless you can prove to them God is also merciful? Did he indeed care for men at all?—was what I longed to know; was all this misery and misrule around us His will—His stern and necessary law—His lazy connivance? And were we to free ourselves from it by any frantic means that came to hand? or had He ever interfered Himself? Was there a chance, a hope, of His interfering now, in our own time, to take the

matter into His own hand, and come out of His place to judge the earth in righteousness? That was what we wanted to know; and poor Mackaye could give no comfort there. "God was great—the wicked would be turned into hell." Ay—the few wilful, triumphant wicked; but the millions of suffering, starving wicked, the victims of society and circumstance—what hope for them? "God was great." And for the clergy, our professed and salaried teachers, all I can say is—and there are tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of workmen who can re-echo my words—with the exception of the dean and my cousin, and one who shall be mentioned hereafter, a clergyman never spoke to me in my life.

Why should he? Was I not a Chartist and an Infidel? The truth is, the clergy are afraid of us. To read the *Dispatch*, is to be excommunicated. Young men's classes? Honour to them, however few they are—however hampered by the restrictions of religious bigotry and political cowardice. But the working men, whether rightly or wrongly, do not trust them; they do not trust the clergy who set them on foot; they do not expect to be taught at them the things they long to know—to be taught the whole truth in them about history, politics, science, the Bible. They suspect them to be mere tubs to the whale—mere substitutes for education, slowly and late adopted, in order to stop the mouths of the importunate. They may misjudge the clergy; but whose fault is it if they do? Clergymen of England!—look at the

history of your Establishment for the last fifty years, and say, what wonder is it if the artisan mistrusts you? Every spiritual reform, since the time of John Wesley, has had to establish itself in the teeth of insult, calumny, and persecution. Every ecclesiastical reform comes not from within, but from without your body. Mr. Horsman, struggling against every kind of temporising and trickery, has to do the work which bishops, by virtue of their seat in the House of Lords, ought to have been doing years ago. Everywhere we see the clergy, with a few persecuted exceptions (like Dr. Arnold), proclaiming themselves the advocates of Toryism, the dogged opponents of our political liberty, living either by the accursed system of pew-rents, or else by one which depends on the high price of corn; chosen exclusively from the classes who crush us down; prohibiting all free discussion on religious points; commanding us to swallow down, with faith as passive and implicit as that of a Papist, the very creeds from which their own bad example, and their scandalous neglect, have, in the last three generations, alienated us; never mixing with the thoughtful working men, except in the prison, the hospital, or in extreme old age; betraying, in every tract, in every sermon, an ignorance of the doubts, the feelings, the very language of the masses, which would be ludicrous, were it not accursed before God and man. And then will you show us a few tardy improvements here and there, and ask us, indignantly, why we distrust you? Oh! gentlemen, if you cannot see for yourselves the

causes of our distrust, it is past our power to show you. We must leave it to God.

But to return to my own story. I had, as I said before, to live by my pen; and in that painful, confused, maimed way, I contrived to scramble on the long winter through, writing regularly for the *Weekly Warwhoop*, and sometimes getting an occasional scrap into some other cheap periodical, often on the very verge of starvation, and glad of a handful of meal from Sandy's widow's barrel. If I had had more than my share of feasting in the summer, I made the balance even, during those frosty months, by many a bitter fast.

And here let me ask you, gentle reader, who are just now considering me ungentle, virulent, and noisy, did you ever, for one day in your whole life, literally, involuntarily, and in spite of all your endeavours, longings, and hungerings, *not get enough to eat?* If you ever have, it must have taught you several things.

But all this while, it must not be supposed that I had forgotten my promise to good Farmer Porter, to look for his missing son. And, indeed, Crossthwaite and I were already engaged in a similar search for a friend of his—the young tailor, who, as I told Porter, had been lost for several months. He was the brother of Crossthwaite's wife, a passionate, kind-hearted Irishman, Mike Kelly by name, reckless and scatter-brained enough to get himself into every possible scrape, and weak enough of will never to get himself out of one.

For these two, Crossthwaite and I had searched from one sweater's den to another, and searched in vain. And though the present interest and exertion kept us both from brooding over our own difficulties, yet in the long run it tended only to embitter and infuriate our minds. The frightful scenes of hopeless misery which we witnessed—the ever-widening pit of pauperism and slavery, gaping for fresh victims day by day, as they dropped out of the fast-lessening "honourable trade," into the ever-increasing miseries of sweating, piecework, and starvation prices; the horrible certainty that the same process which was devouring our trade was slowly, but surely, eating up every other also; the knowledge that there was no remedy, no salvation for us in man, that political economists had declared such to be the law and constitution of society, and that our rulers had believed that message, and were determined to act upon it;—if all these things did not go far towards maddening us, we must have been made of sterner stuff than any one who reads this book.

At last, about the middle of January, just as we had given up the search as hopeless, and poor Katie's eyes were getting red and swelled with daily weeping, a fresh spur was given to our exertions, by the sudden appearance of no less a person than the farmer himself. What ensued upon his coming must be kept for another chapter.

Allon Mackaye, Crosthwaite & Farmer Porter find Billy Porter and Mike Kelly in a sweater's den.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SWEATER'S DEN.

Sc. XXXII. I WAS greedily devouring Lane's "Arabian Nights,"—which had made their first appearance in the shop that day.

Mackaye sat in his usual place, smoking a clean pipe, and assisting his meditations by certain mysterious chiro[illegible] signs; while opposite to him was Farmer Porter—a stone or two thinner than when I had seen him last, but one stone is not much missed out of seventeen. His forehead looked smaller, and his jaws larger than ever, and his red face was sad, and furrowed with care.

Evidently, too, he was ill at ease about other matters besides his son. He was looking out of the corners of his eyes, first at the skinless cast on the chimney-piece, then at the crucified books hanging over his head, as if he considered them not altogether safe companions, and rather expected something "uncanny" to lay hold of him from behind—a process which involved the most horrible contortions of visage, as he carefully abstained from stirring a muscle of his neck or body, but sat bolt upright, his elbows pinned

to his sides, and his knees as close together as his stomach would permit, like a huge corpulent Egyptian Memnon—the most ludicrous contrast to the little old man opposite, twisted up together in his Joseph's coat, like some wizard magician in the stories which I was reading. A curious pair of "poles" the two made; the mesolite whereof, by no means a "*punctum indifferens*," but a true connecting spiritual idea, stood on the table—in the whisky-bottle.

Farmer Porter was evidently big with some great thought, and had all a true poet's bashfulness about publishing the fruit of his creative genius. He looked round again at the skinless man, the caricatures, the books; and, as his eye wandered from pile to pile, and shelf to shelf, his face brightened, and he seemed to gain courage.

Solemnly he put his hat on his knees, and began solemnly brushing it with his cuff. Then he saw me watching him, and stopped. Then he put his pipe solemnly on the hob, and cleared his throat for action, while I buried my face in the book.

"Them's a sight o' larned beuks, Muster Mackaye?"

"Humph!"

"Yow maun ha' got a deal o' scholarship among they, noo?"

"Humph!"

"Dee yow think, noo, yow could find out my boy out of un, by any ways o' conjuring like?"

"By what?"

"Conjuring—to strike a perpendicular, noo, or say the Lord's Prayer backwards?"

"Wadna ye prefer a meeracle or twa?" asked Sandy, after a long pull at the whisky-toddy.

"Or a few effects?" added I.

"Whatsoever you likes, gentlemen. You're best judges, to be sure," answered Farmer Porter, in an awed and helpless voice.

"Aweel—I'm no that disinclined to believe in the occult sciences. I dinna haud a'thegither wi' Salverte. There was mair in them than Magia naturalis, I'm thinking. Mesmerism and magic-lanterns, benj and opium, winna explain all facts, Alton, laddie. Dootless they were an unco' barbaric an' empiric method o' expressing the gran' truth o' man's mastery ower matter. But the interpenetration o' the spiritual an' physical worlds is a gran' truth too; an' aiblins the Deity might ha' allowed witchcraft, just to teach that to puir barbarous folk—signs and wonders, laddie, to mak them believe in somewhat mair than the beasts that perish: an' so ghaists an' warlocks might be a necessary element o' the divine education in dark and carnal times. But I've no read o' a case in which necromancy, nor geomancy, nor [illegible], nor ony other mancy, was applied to sic a purpose as this. Unco gude they were, may be, for the discovery o' stolen spunes—but no that o' stolen tailors."

Farmer Porter had listened to this harangue, with mouth and eyes gradually expanding between awe

and the desire to comprehend; but at the last sentence his countenance fell.

"So I'm thinking, Mister Porter, that the best witch in siccan a case is ane that ye may find at the police-office."

"Anan?"

"Thae detective police are gran' necromancers an' canny in their way: an' I just took the liberty, a week agone, to ha' a crack wi' ane o' 'em. An noo, gin ye're inclined, we'll leave the whusky awhile, an' gang up to that cave o' Trophawnius, ca'd by the vulgar Bow Street, an' speir for tidings o' the twa lost sheep."

So to Bow Street we went, and found our man, to whom the farmer bowed with obsequiousness most unlike his usual burly independence. He evidently half suspected him to have dealings with the world of spirits: but whether he had such or not, they had been utterly unsuccessful; and we walked back again, with the farmer between us, half blubbering—

"I tell ye, there's nothing like ganging to a wise 'ooman. Bless ye, I mind one up to Guy Hall, when I was a barn, that two Irish reapers coom down, and murthered her for the money—and if you lost aught she'd vind it, so sure as the church—and a mighty hand to cure burns; and they two villains coom back, after harvest, seventy mile to do it—and when my vather's cows was shrew-struck, she made un be draed under a brimble as growed together at the both ends, she a praying like mad all the time; and they never got nothing but fourteen shilling and a crooked six-

pence; for why, the devil carried off all the rest of her money; and I seen um both a-hanging in chains by Wisbeach river, with my own eyes. So when they Irish reapers comes into the vens, our chaps always says, 'Yow goo to Guy Hall, there's yor brithren a-waitin' for yow,' and that do make um joost mad loike, it do. I tell ye there's nowt like a wise 'ooman, for vinding out the likes o' this."

At this hopeful stage of the argument I left them to go to the Magazine office. As I passed through Covent Garden, a pretty young woman stopped me under a gas-lamp. I was pushing on when I saw it was Jemmy Downes's Irish wife, and saw, too, that she did not recognise me. A sudden instinct made me stop and hear what she had to say.

"Shure, thin, and ye're a tailor, my young man?"

"Yes," I said, nettled a little that my late loathed profession still betrayed itself in my gait.

"From the counthry?"

I nodded, though I dared not speak a white lie to that effect. I fancied that, somehow, through her I might hear of poor Kelly and his friend Porter.

"Ye'll be wanting work, thin?"

"I have no work."

"Och, thin, it's I can show ye the flower o' work, I can. Bedad, there's a shop I know of where ye'll earn—bedad, if ye're the ninth part of a man, let alone a handy young fellow like the looks of you—och, ye'll earn thirty shillings the week, to the very least—an' beautiful lodgings; och, thin, just come and

see 'em—as chape as mother's milk! Come along, thin—och, it's the beauty ye are—just the nate figure for a tailor."

The fancy still possessed me; and I went with her through one dingy back street after another. She seemed to be purposely taking an indirect road, to mislead me as to my whereabouts; but after a half-hour's walking, I knew, as well as she, that we were in one of the most miserable slop-working nests of the East-end.

She stopped at a house door, and hurried me in, up to the first floor, and into a dirty, slatternly parlour, smelling infamously of gin; where the first object I beheld was Jemmy Downes, sitting before the fire, three-parts drunk, with a couple of dirty, squalling children on the hearth-rug, whom he was kicking and cuffing alternately.

"Och, thin, ye villain, beating the poor darlints whinever I lave ye a minute." And pouring out a volley of Irish curses, she caught up the urchins, one under each arm, and kissed and hugged them till they were nearly choked. "Och, ye plague o' my life—as drunk as a baste; an' I brought home this darlint of a young gentleman to help ye in the business."

Downes got up, and steadying himself by the table, leered at me with lacklustre eyes, and attempted a little ceremonious politeness. How this was to end I did not see; but I was determined to carry it through, on the chance of success, infinitely small as that might be.

"An' I've told him thirty shillings a week's the least he'll earn; and charge for board and lodgings only seven shillings."

"Thirty!—she lies; she's always a lying; don't you mind her. Five-and-forty is the werry lowest figure. Ask my respectable and most piousest partner, Shemei Solomons. Why, blow me—it's Locke!"

"Yes, it is Locke; and surely you're my old friend Jemmy Downes? Shake hands. What an unexpected pleasure to meet you again!"

"Werry unexpected pleasure. Tip us your daddle! Delighted—delighted, as I was a saying, to be of the least use to yer. Take a caulker? Summat heavy, then? No? 'Tak' a drap o' kindness yet, for auld langsyne?"

"You forget I was always a teetotaller."

"Ay," with a look of unfeigned pity. "An' you're a going to lend us a hand? Oh, ah! perhaps you'd like to begin? Here's a most beautiful uniform, now, for a markis in her Majesty's Guards; we don't mention names—tarn't businesslike. P'r'aps you'd like best to work here to-night, for company—'for auld langsyne, my boys;' and I'll introduce yer to the gents upstairs to-morrow."

"No," I said; "I'll go up at once, if you've no objection."

"Och, thin, but the sheets isn't aired—no—faix; and I'm thinking the gentleman as is a going isn't gone yet."

But I insisted on going up at once; and, grumbling,

she followed me. I stopped on the landing of the second floor, and asked which way; and seeing her in no hurry to answer, opened a door, inside which I heard the hum of many voices, saying in as sprightly a tone as I could muster, that I supposed that was the workroom.

As I had expected, a fetid, choking den, with just room enough in it for the seven or eight sallow, starved beings, who, coatless, shoeless, and ragged, sat stitching, each on his truckle-bed. I glanced round; the man whom I sought was not there.

My heart fell; why it had ever risen to such a pitch of hope I cannot tell; and half-cursing myself for a fool, in thus wildly thrusting my head into a squabble, I turned back and shut the door, saying—

"A very pleasant room, ma'am, but a leetle too crowded."

Before she could answer, the opposite door opened; and a face appeared—unwashed, unshaven, shrunken to a skeleton. I did not recognise it at first.

"Blessed Vargen! but that wasn't your voice, Locke?"

"And who are you?"

"Tear and ages! and he don't know Mike Kelly!"

My first impulse was to catch him up in my arms, and run downstairs with him. I controlled myself, however, not knowing how far he might be in his tyrant's power. But his voluble Irish heart burst out at once—

"Oh! blessed saints, take me out o' this! take me

out for the love of Jesus! take me out o' this hell, or I'll go mad intirely! Och! will nobody have pity on poor sowls in purgatory—here in prison like negur slaves? We're starved to the bone, we are, and kilt intirely with cowld."

And as he clutched my arm, with his long, skinny, trembling fingers, I saw that his hands and feet were all chapped and bleeding. Neither shoe nor stocking did he possess; his only garments were a ragged shirt and trousers; and—and, and in horrible mockery of his own misery, a grand new flowered satin vest, which to-morrow was to figure in some gorgeous shop-window!

"Och! Mother of Heaven!" he went on, wildly, "when will I get out to the fresh air? For five months I haven't seen the blessed light of sun, nor spoken to the praste, nor ate a bit o' mate, barring bread-and-butter. Shure, it's all the blessed Sabbaths and saints' days I've been a working like a haythen Jew, an niver seen the insides o' the chapel to confess my sins, and me poor sowl's lost intirely—and they've pawned the relaver[1] this fifteen weeks, and not a boy of us iver sot foot in the street since."

"Vot's that row?" roared at this juncture Downes's voice from below.

"Och, thin," shrieked the woman, "here's that thief o' the warld, Micky Kelly, slandhering o' us

[1] A coat, we understand, which is kept by the coatless wretches in these sweaters' dungeons, to be used by each of them in turn when they want to go out.—EDITOR.

afore the blessed heaven, and he owing £2 : 14 : 0½ for his board an' lodging, let alone pawn-tickets, and goin' to rin away, the black-hearted ongrateful sarpent!" And she began yelling indiscriminately, "Thieves!" "Murder!" "Blasphemy!" and such other ejaculations, which (the English ones at least) had not the slightest reference to the matter in hand.

"I'll come to him!" said Downes, with an oath, and rushed stumbling up the stairs, while the poor wretch sneaked in again, and slammed the door to. Downes battered at it, but was met with a volley of curses from the men inside; while, profiting by the Babel, I blew out the light, ran downstairs, and got safe into the street.

In two hours afterwards, Mackaye, Porter, Crossthwaite, and I were at the door, accompanied by a policeman, and a search-warrant. Porter had insisted on accompanying us. He had made up his mind that his son was at Downes's; and all representations of the smallness of his chance were fruitless. He worked himself up into a state of complete frenzy, and flourished a huge stick in a way which shocked the policeman's orderly and legal notions.

"That may do very well down in your country, sir; but you arn't a goin' to use that there weapon here, you know, not by no hact o' Parliament as I knows on."

"Ow, it's joost a way I ha' wi' me." And the stick was quiet for fifty yards or so, and then recommenced smashing imaginary skulls.

"You'll do somebody a mischief, sir, with that. You'd much better a lend it me."

Porter tucked it under his arm for fifty yards more; and so on, till we reached Downes's house.

The policeman knocked: and the door was opened, cautiously, by an old Jew, of a most un-"Caucasian" cast of features, however "high-nosed," as Mr. Disraeli has it.

The policeman asked to see Michael Kelly.

"Michaelsh? I don't know such namesh——" But before the parley could go farther, the farmer burst past policeman and Jew, and rushed into the passage, roaring, in a voice which made the very windows rattle,

"Billy Poorter! Billy Poorter! whor be yow? whor be yow?"

We all followed him upstairs, in time to see him charging valiantly, with his stick for a bayonet, the small person of a Jew-boy, who stood at the head of the stairs in a scientific attitude. The young rascal planted a dozen blows in the huge carcase—he might as well have thumped the rhinoceros in the Regent's Park; the old man ran right over him, without stopping, and dashed up the stairs; [at the head of which —oh, joy!—appeared a long, shrunken, red-haired figure, the tears on its dirty cheeks glittering in the candle-glare.] In an instant father and son were in each other's arms.

"Oh, my barn! my barn! my barn! my barn." And then the old Hercules held him off at arm's

length, and looked at him with a wistful face, and hugged him again with "My barn! my barn!" He had nothing else to say. Was it not enough? And poor Kelly danced frantically around them, hurrahing; his own sorrows forgotten in his friend's deliverance.

The Jew-boy shook himself, turned, and darted downstairs past us; the policeman quietly put out his foot, tripped him headlong, and jumping down after him, extracted from his grasp a heavy pocket-book.

"Ah! my dear mothersh's dying gift! Oh, dear! oh, dear! give it back to a poor orphansh!"

"Didn't I see you take it out o' the old un's pocket, you young villain?" answered the maintainer of order, as he shoved the book into his bosom, and stood with one foot on his writhing victim, a complete nineteenth-century St. Michael.

"Let me hold him," I said, "while you go upstairs."

"*You* hold a Jew-boy!—you hold a mad cat!" answered the policeman, contemptuously—and with justice—for at that moment Downes appeared on the first-floor landing, cursing and blaspheming.

"He's my 'prentice! he's my servant! I've got a bond, with his own hand to it, to serve me for three years. I'll have the law of you—I will!"

Then the meaning of the big stick came out. The old man leapt down the stairs, and seized Downes. "You're the tyrant as has locked my barn up here!" And a thrashing commenced, which it made my bones ache only to look at. Downes had no chance; the

old man felled him on his face in a couple of blows, and taking both hands to his stick, hewed away at him as if he had been a log.

"I waint hit a's head! I waint hit a's head!"—whack, whack. "Let me be!"—whack, whack—puff. "It does me gude, it does me gude!"—puff, puff, puff—whack. "I've been a bottling of it up for three years, come Whitsuntide!"—whack, whack, whack—while Mackaye and Crossthwaite stood coolly looking on, and the wife shut herself up in the side-room, and screamed "Murder!"

The unhappy policeman stood at his wits' end, between the prisoner below and the breach of the peace above, bellowing in vain, in the Queen's name, to us, and to the grinning tailors on the landing. At last, as Downes's life seemed in danger, he wavered; the Jew-boy seized the moment, jumped up, upsetting the constable, dashed like an eel between Crossthwaite and Mackaye, gave me a back-handed blow in passing, which I felt for a week after, and vanished through the street-door, which he locked after him.

"Very well!" said the functionary, rising solemnly, and pulling out a note-book—"Scar under left eye, nose a little twisted to the right, bad chilblains on the hands. You'll keep till next time, young man. Now, you fat gentleman up there, have you done a qualifying of yourself for Newgate?"

The old man had run upstairs again, and was hugging his son; but when the policeman lifted Downes, he rushed back to his victim, and begged, like a great

schoolboy, for leave to "bet him joost won bit moor."

"Let me bet un! I'll pay un!—I'll pay all as my son owes un! Marcy me! where's my pooss?" And so on raged the Babel, till we got the two poor fellows safe out of the house. We had to break open the door to do it, thanks to that imp of Israel.

"For God's sake, take us too!" almost screamed five or six other voices.

"They're all in debt—every onesh; they shan't go till they paysh, if there's law in England," whined the old Jew, who had reappeared.

"I'll pay for 'em—I'll pay every farden, if so be as they treated my boy well. Here, you, Mr. Locke, there's the ten pounds as I promised you. Why, whor is my pooss?"

The policeman solemnly handed it to him. He took it, turned it over, looked at the policeman half frightened, and pointed with his fat thumb at Mackaye.

"Well, he said as you was a conjuror—and sure he was right."

He paid me the money. I had no mind to keep it in such company; so I got the poor fellows' pawn-tickets, and Crossthwaite and I took the things out for them. When we returned, we found them in a group in the passage, holding the door open, in their fear lest we should be locked up, or entrapped in some way. Their spirits seemed utterly broken. Some three or four went off to lodge where they could; the

majority went upstairs again to work. That, even that dungeon, was their only home—their only hope—as it is of thousands of "free" Englishmen at this moment.

We returned, and found the old man with his new-found prodigal sitting on his knee, as if he had been a baby. Sandy told me afterwards that he had scarcely kept him from carrying the young man all the way home; he was convinced that the poor fellow was dying of starvation. I think really he was not far wrong. In the corner sat Kelly, crouched together like a baboon, blubbering, hurrahing, invoking the saints, cursing the sweaters, and blessing the present company. We were afraid, for several days, that his wits were seriously affected.

And, in his old arm-chair, pipe in mouth, sat good Sandy Mackaye, wiping his eyes with the many-coloured sleeve, and moralising to himself, *sotto voce:*

"The auld Romans made slaves o' their debitors; sae did the Anglo-Saxons, for a' good Major Cartwright has writ to the contrary. But I didna ken the same Christian practice was part o' the Breetish constitution. Aweel, aweel—atween Riot Acts, Government by Commissions, and ither little extravagants and codicils o' Mammon's making, it's no that easy to ken, the day, what is the Breetish constitution, and what isn't. Tak a drappie, Billy Porter, lad?"

"Never again so long as I live. I've learnt a lesson and a half about that, these last few months."

"Aweel, moderation's best, but abstinence better

than naething. Nae man shall deprive me o' my leeberty, but I'll tempt nae man to gie up his." And he actually put the whisky-bottle by into the cupboard.

The old man and his son went home next day, promising me, if I would but come to see them, "twa hundert acres o' the best partridge-shooting, and wild dooks as plenty as sparrows; and to live in clover till I bust, if I liked." And so, as Bunyan has it, they went on their way, and I saw them no more.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN EMERSONIAN SERMON.

CERTAINLY, if John Crossthwaite held the victim-of-circumstance doctrine in theory, he did not allow Mike Kelly to plead it in practice, as an extenuation of his misdeeds. Very different from his Owenite "it's-nobody's-fault" harangues in the debating society, or his admiration for the teacher of whom my readers shall have a glimpse shortly, was his lecture that evening to the poor Irishmen on "It's all your own fault." Unhappy Kelly! he sat there like a beaten cur, looking first at one of us, and then at the other, for mercy, and finding none. As soon as Crossthwaite's tongue was tired, Mackaye's began, on the sins of drunkenness, hastiness, improvidence, over-trustfulness, etc. etc., and, above all, on the cardinal offence of not having signed the protest years before, and spurned the dishonourable trade, as we had done. Even his most potent excuse that "a boy must live somehow," Crossthwaite treated as contemptuously as if he had been a very Leonidas, while Mackaye chimed in with—

"An' ye a Papist! ye talk o' praying to saints an'

martyrs, that died in torments because they wad na do what they should na do? What ha' ye to do wi' martyrs?—a meeserable wretch that sells his soul for a mess o' pottage—four slices per diem o' thin bread-and-butter? Et propter veetam veevendi perdere causas! Dinna tell me o' your hardships—ye've had your deserts—your rights were just equivalent to your mights, an' so ye got them."

"Faix, thin, Misther Mackaye, darlint, an' whin did I desarve to pawn me own goose an' board, an' sit looking at the spidhers for the want o' them?"

"Pawn his ain goose! Pawn himsel! pawn his needle—gin it had been worth the pawning, they'd ha' ta'en it. An' yet there's a command in Deuteronomy, Ye shall na tak the millstone in pledge, for it's a man's life; nor yet keep his raiment ower night, but gie it the puir body back, that he may sleep in his ain claes, an' bless ye. O—but pawnbrokers dinna care for blessings—na marketable value in them, whatsoever."

"And the shopkeeper," said I, "in 'the Arabian Nights,' refuses to take the fisherman's net in pledge, because he gets his living thereby."

"Ech! but, laddie, they were puir legal Jews, under carnal ordinances, an' daur na even tak an honest five per cent interest for their money. An' the baker o' Bagdad, why he was a benighted heathen, ye ken, an' deceivit by that fause prophet, Mahomet, to his eternal damnation, or he wad never ha' gone aboot to fancy a fisherman was his brither."

"Faix, an' ain't we all brothers?" asked Kelly.

"Ay, and no," said Sandy, with an expression which would have been a smile, but for its depths of bitter earnestness; "brethren in Christ, my laddie."

"An' ain't that all over the same?"

"Ask the preachers. Gin they meant brothers, they'd say brothers, be sure; but because they don't mean brothers at a', they say brethren—ye'll mind, brethren—to soun' antiquate, an' professional, an' perfunctory-like, for fear it should be ower real, an' practical, an' startling, an' a' that; and then jist limit it down wi' a 'in Christ,' for fear o' owre wide applications, and a' that. But

> "'For a' that, an' a' that,
> It's coming yet for a' that,
> That man to man, the warld o'er,
> Shall brothers be, for a' that'—

An' na brithren any mair at a'!"

"An' didn't the blessed Jesus die for all?"

"What? for heretics, Micky?"

"Bedad, thin, an' I forgot that intirely!"

"Of course you did! It's strange, laddie," said he, turning to me, "that that Name suld be everywhere, fra the thunderers o' Exeter Ha', to this puir, feckless Paddy, the watchword o' exclusiveness. I'm thinking ye'll no find the workmen believe in't, till somebody can fin' the plan o' making it the sign o' universal comprehension. Gin I had na seen in my youth that a brither in Christ meant less a thousand-fold than a

brither out o' him, I might ha' believit the noo—we'll no say what. I've an owre great organ o' marvellousness, an' o' veneration too, I'm afeard."

"Ah!" said Crossthwaite, "you should come and hear Mr. Windrush to-night, about the all-embracing benevolence of the Deity, and the abomination of limiting it by all those narrow creeds and dogmas."

"An' wha's Meester Windrush, then?"

"Oh, he's an American; he was a Calvinist preacher originally, I believe; but, as he told us last Sunday evening, he soon cast away the worn-out vestures of an obsolete faith, which were fast becoming only crippling fetters."

"An' ran oot sarkless on the public, eh? I'm afeard there's mony a man else that throws awa' the gude auld plaid o' Scots Puritanism, an' is unco fain to cover his nakedness wi' ony cast popinjay's feathers he can forgather wi'. Aweel, aweel—a puir priestless age it is, the noo. We'll e'en gang hear him the nicht, Alton, laddie; ye ha' na darkened the kirk door this mony a day—nor I neither, mair by token."

It was too true. I had utterly given up the whole problem of religion as insoluble. I believed in poetry, science, and democracy—and they were enough for me then; enough, at least, to leave a mighty hunger in my heart, I knew not for what. And as for Mackaye, though brought up, as he told me, a rigid Scotch Presbyterian, he had gradually ceased to attend the church of his fathers.

"It was no the kirk o' his fathers—the auld God-

trusting kirk that Clavers dragoonit down by burns and muirsides. It was a' gane dead an' dry; a piece of Auld-Bailey barristration anent soul-saving dodges. [What did he want wi' proofs o' the being o' God, an' o' the doctrine o' original sin? He could see eneugh o' them ayont the shop-door, ony tide.] They made puir Rabbie Burns an anything-arian, wi' their blethers, an' he was near gaun the same gate."

And, besides, he absolutely refused to enter any place of worship where there were pews. ["He wadna follow after a multitude to do evil; he wad na gang before his Maker wi' a lee in his right hand. (Nae wonder folks were so afraid o' the names o' equality an' britherhood, when they'd kicked them out e'en o' the kirk o' God. Pious folks may ca' me a sinfu' auld Atheist. They winna gang to a harmless stage play —an' richt they—for fear o' countenancing the sin that's dune there, an' I winna gang to the kirk, for fear o' countenancing the sin that's dune there, by putting down my hurdies on that stool o' antichrist, a haspit pew!"]

I was, therefore, altogether surprised at the promptitude with which he agreed to go and hear Crossthwaite's new-found prophet. His reasons for so doing may be, I think, gathered from the conversation towards the end of this chapter.

Well, we went; and I, for my part, was charmed with Mr. Windrush's eloquence. His style, which was altogether Emersonian, quite astonished me by its alternate bursts of what I considered brilliant

declamation, and of forcible epigrammatic antithesis. I do not deny that I was a little startled by some of his doctrines, and suspected that he had not seen much, either of St. Giles's cellars or tailors' workshops either, when he talked of sin as "only a lower form of good. Nothing," he informed us, "was produced in nature without pain and disturbance; and what we had been taught to call sin was, in fact, nothing but the birth-throes attendant on the progress of the species.—As for the devil, Novalis, indeed, had gone so far as to suspect him to be a necessary illusion. Novalis was a mystic, and tainted by the old creeds. The illusion was not necessary—it was disappearing before the fast-approaching meridian light of philosophic religion. Like the myths of Christianity, it had grown up in an age of superstition, when men, blind to the wondrous order of the universe, believed that supernatural beings, like the Homeric gods, actually interfered in the affairs of mortals. Science had revealed the irrevocability of the laws of nature —was man alone to be exempt from them? No. The time would come when it would be as obsolete an absurdity to talk of the temptation of a fiend, as it was now to talk of the wehr-wolf, or the angel of the thunder-cloud. The metaphor might remain, doubtless, as a metaphor, in the domain of poetry, whose office was to realise, in objective symbols, the subjective ideas of the human intellect; but philosophy, and the pure sentiment of religion, which found all things, even God himself, in the recesses

Mr Windbuckle's sermon and Sandy's antithetic reaction.

of its own enthusiastic heart, must abjure such a notion."]

. . . . . .

Sc. XXXV. "What!" he asked again, "shall all nature be a harmonious whole, reflecting, in every drop of dew
Fs. which gems the footsteps of the morning, the infinite love and wisdom of its Maker, and man alone be excluded from his part in that concordant choir? Yet such is the doctrine of the advocates of free-will, and of sin—its phantom-bantling. Man disobey his Maker! disarrange and break the golden wheels and springs of the infinite machine! The thought were blasphemy! —impossibility! All things fulfil their destiny; and so does man, in a higher or lower sphere of being. Shall I punish the robber? Shall I curse the profligate? As soon destroy the toad, because my partial taste may judge him ugly; or doom to hell, for his carnivorous appetite, the [illegible] of my native lakes! Toad is not horrible to toad, or thief to thief. Philanthropists or statesmen may environ him with more genial circumstances, and so enable his propensities to work more directly for the good of society;
W. but to punish him—to punish nature for daring to be
8. nature!—Never! I may thank the Upper Destinies that they have not made me as other men are—that they have endowed me with nobler instincts, a more delicate conformation than the thief; but I have my part to play, and he has his. Why should we wish to be other than the All-wise has made us?"

"Fine doctrine that," grumbled Sandy; "gin ye've

first made up your mind wi' the Pharisee, that ye *are* no like ither men."

"Shall I pray, then? For what? I will coax none, flatter none—not even the Supreme! I will not be absurd enough to wish to change that order, by which sun and stars, saints and sinners, alike fulfil their destinies. There is one comfort my friends; coax and flatter as we will, He will not hear us."

"Pleasant, for puir deevils like us!" quoth Mackaye.

"What then remains? Thanks, thanks—not of words, but of actions. Worship is a life, not a ceremony. He who would honour the Supreme, let him cheerfully succumb to the destiny which the Supreme has allotted, and, like the shell or the flower—('Or the pickpocket,' added Mackaye, almost audibly)—become the happy puppet of the universal impulse. He who would honour Christ, let him become a Christ himself! Theodore of Mopsuestia—born, alas! before his time—a prophet for whom as yet no audience stood ready in the amphitheatre of souls—'Christ!' he was wont to say; 'I can become Christ myself, if I will.' Become thou Christ, my brother! He has an idea—the idea of utter submission—abnegation of his own fancied will before the supreme necessities. Fulfil that idea, and thou art he! Deny thyself, and then only wilt thou be a reality; for thou hast no self. If thou hadst a self, thou wouldst but lie in denying it—and would The Being thank thee for denying what he had given thee? But thou hast none! [God is

circumstance, and thou His creature! Be content! Fear not, strive not, change not, repent not! Thou art nothing! Be nothing, and thou becomest a part of all things!"

And so Mr. Windrush ended his discourse, which Crossthwaite had been all the while busily taking down in short-hand, for the edification of the readers of a certain periodical, and also for those of this my Life.

I plead guilty to having been entirely carried away by what I heard. There was so much which was true, so much more which seemed true, so much which it would have been convenient to believe true, and all put so eloquently and originally, as I then considered, that, in short, I was in raptures, and so was poor dear Crossthwaite; and as we walked home, we dinned Mr. Windrush's praises one into each of Mackaye's ears. The old man, however, paced on silent and meditative. At last—

"A hunder sects or so in the land o' Gret Britain; an' a hunder or so single preachers, each man a sect of his ain! an' this the last fashion! Last, indeed! The moon of Calvinism's far gone in the fourth quarter, when it's come to the like o' that. Truly, the soul-saving business is a'thegither fa'n to a low ebb, as Master Tummas says somewhere!"

"Well, but," asked Crossthwaite, "was not that man, at least, splendid?"

"An' hoo much o' thae gran' objectives an' subjectives did ye comprehen', then, Johnnie, my man?"

"Quite enough for me," answered John, in a somewhat nettled tone.

"An' sae did I."

"But you ought to hear him often. You can't judge of his system from one sermon, in this way."

"Seestem! and what's that like?"

"Why, he has a plan for uniting all sects and parties, on the one broad fundamental ground of the unity of God as revealed by science——"

"Verra like uniting o' men by just pu'ing aff their claes, and telling 'em 'There, ye're a' brithers noo, on the one broad fundamental principle o' want o' breeks.'"

"Of course," went on Crossthwaite, without taking notice of this interruption, "he allows full liberty of conscience. All he wishes for is the emancipation of intellect. He will allow every one, he says, to realise that idea to himself, by the representations which suit him best."

"An' so he has no objection to a wee playing at Papistry, gin a man finds it good to tickle up his soul?"

"Ay, he did speak of that—what did he call it? Oh! 'one of the ways in which the Christian idea naturally embodied itself in imaginative minds!' but the higher intellects, of course, would want fewer helps of that kind. 'They would see'—ay, that was it—'the pure white light of truth, without requiring those coloured refracting media.'"

"That wad depend muckle on whether the light o' truth chose or not, I'm thinking. But, Johnnie, lad

—guide us and save us!—whaur got ye a' these gran' outlandish words the nicht?"

"Haven't I been taking down every one of these lectures for the press?"

"The press gang to the father o't—and you too, for lending your han' in the matter—for a mair accursed aristocrat I never heerd, sin' I first ate haggis. Oh, ye gowk—ye gowk! Dinna ye see what be the upshot o' siccan doctrin'? That every puir fellow as has no gret brains in his head will be left to his superstition, an' his ignorance to fulfil the lusts o' his flesh; while the few that are geniuses, or fancy themselves sae, are to ha' the monopoly o' this private still o' philosophy—these carbonari, illuminati, vehmgericht, samothracian mysteries o' bottled moonshine. An' when that comes to pass, I'll just gang back to my schule and my catechism, and begin again wi' 'who was born o' the Virgin Mary, suffered oonder Pontius Pilate!' Hech! lads, there's no subjectives and objectives there, na beggarly, windy abstractions, but joost a plain fact, that God cam' down to look for puir bodies, instead o' leaving puir bodies to gang looking for Him. An' here's a pretty place to be left looking for Him in—between gin-shops and gutters! A pretty Gospel for the publicans an' harlots, to tell 'em that if their bairns are canny eneugh, they may possibly some day be allowed to believe that there is one God, and not twa! And then, by way of practical application—'Hech! my dear, starving, simple brothers, ye mauna be sae owre conscientious, and gang fashing

yourselves anent being brutes an' deevils, for the gude God's made ye sae, and He's verra weel content to see you sae, gin ye be content or no.'"

"Then, do you believe in the old doctrines of Christianity?" I asked.

"Dinna speir what I believe in. I canna tell ye. I've been seventy years trying to believe in God, and to meet anither man that believed in him. So I'm just like the Quaker o' the town o' Redcross, that met by himself every First-day in his ain hoose."

"Well, but," I asked again, "is not complete freedom of thought a glorious aim—to emancipate man's noblest part—the intellect—from the trammels of custom and ignorance?"

"Intellect—intellect!" rejoined he, according to his fashion, catching one up at a word, and playing on that in order to answer, not what one said, but what one's words led to. "I'm sick o' all the talk anent intellect I hear noo. An' what's the use o' intellect? Aristocracy o' intellect,' they cry. Curse a' aristocracies—intellectual anes, as well as anes o' birth, or rank, or money! What! will I ca' a man my superior, because he's cleverer than mysel?—will I boo down to a bit o' brains, ony mair than to a stock or a stane? Let a man prove himsel better than me, my laddie—honester, humbler, kinder, wi' mair sense o' the duty o' man, an' the weakness o' man—and that man I'll acknowledge—that man's my king, my leader, though he war as stupid as Eppe Dalgleish, that could na count five on her fingers, and yet keepit her drucken

father by her ain hands' labour for twenty-three yeers."

We could not agree to all this, but we made a rule of never contradicting the old sage in one of his excited moods, for fear of bringing on a week's silent fit—a state which generally ended in his smoking himself into a bilious melancholy; but I made up my mind to be henceforth a frequent auditor of Mr. Windrush's oratory.

"An' sae the deevil's dead!" said Sandy, half to himself, as he sat crooning and smoking that night over the fire. "Gone at last, puir fallow!—an' he sae little appreciated, too! Every gowk laying his ain sins on Nickie's back, puir Nickie!—verra like that much misunderstood politeecian, Mr. John Cade, as Charles Buller ca'd him in the Hoose o' Commons—an' he to be dead at last! the warld 'll seem quite unco without his auld-farrant phizog on the streets. Aweel, aweel—aiblins he's but shammin'.——

"'But the cheerfu' Spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.'

At ony rate, I'd no bury him till he began smell a wee strong like. It's a grewsome thing, is premature interment, Alton, laddie!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

BUT all this while, my slavery to Mr. O'Flynn's party-spirit and coarseness was becoming daily more and more intolerable—an explosion was inevitable; and an explosion came.

Mr. O'Flynn found out that I had been staying at Cambridge, and at a cathedral city too; and it was quite a godsend to him to find any one who knew a word about the institutions at which he had been railing weekly for years. So nothing would serve him but my writing a set of articles on the universities, as a prelude to one on the Cathedral Establishments. In vain I pleaded the shortness of my stay there, and the smallness of my information.

"Och, were not abuses notorious? And couldn't I get them up out of any Radical paper—and just put in a little of my own observations, and a dashing personal cut or two, to spice the thing up, and give it an original look? and if I did not choose to write that—why," with an enormous oath, "I should write nothing." So—for I was growing weaker and weaker, and indeed my hack-writing was breaking down my

moral sense, as it does that of most men—I complied; and burning with vexation, feeling myself almost guilty of a breach of trust toward those from whom I had received nothing but kindness, I scribbled off my first number and sent it to the editor—to see it appear next week, three-parts re-written, and every fact of my own furnishing twisted and misapplied, till the whole thing was as vulgar and commonplace a piece of rant as ever disgraced the people's cause. And all this, in spite of a solemn promise, confirmed by a volley of oaths that I "should say what I liked, and speak my whole mind, as one who had seen things with his own eyes had a right to do."

Furious, I set off to the editor; and not only my pride, but what literary conscience I had left, was stirred to the bottom by seeing myself made, whether I would or not, a blackguard and a slanderer.

As it was ordained, Mr. O'Flynn was gone out for an hour or two; and, unable to settle down to any work till I had fought my battle with him fairly out, I wandered onward, towards the West End, staring into print-shop windows and meditating on many things.

As it was ordained, also, I turned up Regent Street, and into Langham Place; when, at the door of All-Souls Church, behold a crowd and a long string of carriages arriving, and all the pomp and glory of a grand wedding.

I joined the crowd from mere idleness, and somehow found myself in the first rank just as the bride was stepping out of the carriage—it was Miss Staun-

ton; and the old gentleman who handed her out was no other than the dean. They were, of course, far too deeply engaged to recognise insignificant little me, so that I could stare as thoroughly to my heart's content as any of the butcher-boys and nursery-maids around me.

She was closely veiled—but not too closely to prevent my seeing her magnificent lip and nostril curling with pride, resolve, rich tender passion. Her glorious black-brown hair—the true "purple locks" which Homer so often talks of—rolled down beneath her veil in great heavy ringlets; and with her tall and rounded figure, and step as firm and queenly as if she were going to a throne, she seemed to me the very ideal of those magnificent Eastern Zobeydehs and Nourmahals, whom I used to dream of after reading the "Arabian Nights."

As they entered the doorway, almost touching me, she looked round, as if for some one. The dean whispered something in his gentle, stately way, and she answered by one of those looks so intense, and yet so bright, so full of unutterable depths of meaning and emotion, that, in spite of all my antipathy, I felt an admiration akin to awe thrill through me, and gazed after her so intently, that Lillian—Lillian herself—was at my side, and almost passed me before I was aware of it.

Yes, there she was, the foremost among a bevy of fair girls, "herself the fairest far," all April smiles and tears, golden curls, snowy rosebuds, and hovering

clouds of lace—a fairy queen;—but yet—but yet—how shallow that basal eye, how empty of meaning those delicate features, compared with the strength and intellectual richness of the face which had preceded her!

It was too true—I had never remarked it before; but now it flashed across me like lightning—and like lightning vanished; for Lillian's eye caught mine, and there was the faintest spark of a smile of recognition, and pleased surprise, and a nod. I blushed scarlet, with delight; some servant-girl or other, who stood next to me, had seen it too—quick-eyed that women are—and was looking curiously at me. I turned, I knew not why, in my delicious shame, and plunged through the crowd to hide I knew not what.

I walked on—poor fool—in an ecstasy; the whole world was transfigured in my eyes, and virtue and wisdom beamed from every face I passed. The omnibus-horses were racers, and the drivers—were they not my brothers of the people? The very policemen looked sprightly and philanthropic. I shook hands earnestly with the crossing-sweeper of the Regent Circus, gave him my last twopence, and rushed on, like a young David, to exterminate that Philistine O'Flynn.

Ah well! I was a great fool, as others too have been; but yet, that little chance-meeting did really raise me. It made me sensible that I was made for better things than low abuse of the higher classes. It gave me courage to speak out, and act without

fear of consequences, once at least in that confused facing-both-ways period of my life. (O woman! woman! only true missionary of civilisation and brotherhood, and gentle, forgiving charity; is it in thy power, and perhaps in thine only, to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives! One real lady, who should dare to stoop, what might she not do with us—with our sisters? If——)

[There are hundreds, answers the reader, who do stoop. Elizabeth Fry was a lady, well-born, rich, educated, and she has many scholars.

True, my dear readers, true—and may God bless her and her scholars. Do you think the working men forget them? But look at St. Giles's, or Spitalfields, or Shadwell, and say, is not the harvest plentiful, and the labourers, alas! few? No one asserts that nothing is done; the question is, is enough done? [Does the supply of mercy meet the demand of misery? Walk into the next court and see!]

. . . . . .

[I found Mr. O'Flynn in his sanctum, busy with paste and scissors, in the act of putting in a string of advertisements—indecent French novels, Atheistic tracts, quack medicines, and slopsellers' puffs;] and commenced with as much dignity as I could muster:

"What on earth do you mean, sir, by re-writing my article?"

"What—(in the other place)—do you mean by giving me the trouble of re-writing it? Me head's splitting now with sitting up, cutting out, and putting

in. Poker o' Moses! but ye'd given it an intirely aristocratic tendency. What did ye mane" (and three or four oaths rattled out) "by talking about the pious intentions of the original founders, and the democratic tendencies of monastic establishments?"

"I wrote it because I thought it."

"Is that any reason ye should write it?" And there was another bit, too—it made my hair stand on end when I saw it, to think how near I was sending the copy to press without looking at it—something about a French Socialist, and Church Property."

"Oh! you mean, I suppose, the story of the French Socialist, who told me that church property was just the only property in England which he would spare, because it was the only one which had definite duties attached to it, that the real devourers of the people were not the bishops, who, however rich, were at least bound to work in return for their riches, but the landlords and millionaires, who refused to confess the duties of property, while they raved about its rights."

"Bedad, that's it; and pretty doctrine, too!"

"But it's true: it's an entirely new and a very striking notion, and I consider it my duty to mention it."

"Thrue! What the devil does that matter? There's a time to speak the truth, and a time not, isn't there?" It'll make a grand hit, now, in a leader upon the Irish Church question, to back the prastes against the landlords. But if I'd let that in as it stood, bedad, I'd have lost three parts of my sub-

scribers the next week. Every soul of the Independents, let alone the Chartists, would have bid me good morning. Now do, like a good boy, give us something more the right thing next time. Draw it strong—A good drunken supper-party and a police-row; if ye haven't seen one, get it up out of Pater Priggins—or Layer might do, if the other wasn't convanient. That's Dublin, to be sure, but one university's just like another. And give us a seduction or two, and a brace of Dons carried home drunk from Barnwell by the Procthors."

"Really I never saw anything of the kind; and as for profligacy amongst the Dons, I don't believe it exists. [I'll call them idle, and bigoted, and careless of the morals of the young men, because I know that they are so; but as for anything more, I believe them to be as sober, respectable a set of Pharisees as the world ever saw."]

Mr. O'Flynn was waxing warm, and the bully-vein began fast to show itself.

"I don't care a curse, sir! My subscribers won't stand it, and they sha'n't! [I am a man of business, sir, and a man of the world, sir,] and faith that's more than you are, and I know what will sell the paper, and by J——s I'll let no upstart spalpeen dictate to me!"

"Then I'll tell you what, sir," quoth I, waxing warm in my turn, ["I don't know which are the greater rogues, you or your subscribers. You a patriot? You are a humbug. Look at those advertisements, and

deny it if you can. Crying out for education, and helping to debauch the public mind with Voltaire's 'Candide,' and Eugène Sue—swearing by Jesus, and puffing Atheism and blasphemy—yelling at a quack government, quack law, quack priesthoods, and then dirtying your fingers with half-crowns for advertising Holloway's ointment and Parr's life pills—shrieking about slavery of labour to capital, and inserting Moses and Son's doggerel—ranting about searching investigations and the march of knowledge, and concealing every fact which cannot be made to pander to the passions of your dupes—extolling the freedom of the press, and showing yourself in your own office a tyrant and a censor of the press. You a patriot? You the people's friend? You are doing everything in your power to blacken the people's cause in the eyes of their enemies. You are simply a humbug, a hypocrite, and a scoundrel; and so I bid you good morning."

Mr. O'Flynn had stood, during this harangue, speechless with passion, those loose lips of his wreathing like a pair of earthworms. It was only when I stopped that he regained his breath, and with a volley of incoherent oaths, caught up his chair and hurled it at my head. Luckily, I had seen enough of his temper already, to keep my hand on the lock of the door for the last five minutes. I darted out of the room quicker than I ever did out of one before or since. The chair took effect on the luckless door; and as I threw a flying glance behind me, I saw one leg sticking through the middle panel, in a way that

augured ill for my skull, had it been in the way of Mr. O'Flynn's fury.

I ran home to Mackaye in a state of intense self-glorification, and told him the whole story. He chuckled, he crowed, he hugged me to his bosom.

"Leeze me o' ye! but I kenned ye were o' the true Norse blude after a'!

"'For a' that, an' a' that,
A man's a man for a' that.'

Oh, but I hae expeckit it this month an' mair! Oh, but I prophesied it, Johnnie!"

"Then why, in Heaven's name, did you introduce me to such a scoundrel?"

"I sent you to schule, lad, I sent you to schule. Ye wad na be ruled by me. Ye tuk me for a puir doited auld misanthrope; an' I thocht to gie ye the meat ye lusted after, an' fill ye wi' the fruit o' your ain desires. An' noo that ye've gane doon in the fire o' temptation, an' conquered, here's your reward standin' ready. Special prawvidences!—wha can doot them? I ha' had mony—miracles I might ca' them, to see how they cam' just when I was gaun daft wi' despair."

And then he told me that the editor of a popular journal, of the Howitt and Eliza Cook school, had called on me that morning, and promised me work enough, and pay enough, to meet all present difficulties.

I did indeed accept the curious coincidence, if not as a reward for an act of straightforwardness, in which I saw no merit, at least as proof that the upper powers

had not altogether forgotten me. I found both the editor and his periodical, as I should have wished them, temperate and sunny—somewhat clap-trap and sentimental, perhaps, and afraid of speaking out, as all parties are, but still willing to allow my fancy free range in light fictions, descriptions of foreign countries, scraps of showy rose-pink morality and such like; which, though they had no more power against the raging mass of crime, misery, and discontent, around, than a peacock's feather against a three-decker, still were all genial, graceful, kindly, humanising, and soothed my discontented and impatient heart in the work of composition.

Alton lectures George as to his responsibilities as a future clergyman.

F.F.B.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TOWNSMAN'S SERMON TO THE GOWNSMAN.

Sc XXXVII

ONE morning in February, a few days after this explosion, I was on the point of starting to go to the dean's house about that weary list of subscribers, which seemed destined never to be filled up, when my cousin George burst in upon me. He was in the highest good spirits at having just taken a double first-class at Cambridge; and after my congratulations, sincere and hearty enough, were over, he offered to accompany me to that reverend gentleman's house.

He said in an off-hand way, that he had no particular business there, but he thought it just as well to call on the dean and mention his success, in case the old fellow should not have heard of it.

"For you see," he said, "I am a sort of *protégé*, both on my own account and on Lord Lynedale's—Ellerton, he is now—you know he is just married to the dean's niece, Miss Staunton—and Ellerton's a capital fellow—promised me a living as soon as I'm in priest's orders. So my cue is now," he went on as we walked down the Strand together, "to get ordained as fast as ever I can."

"But," I asked, "have you read much for ordination, or seen much of what a clergyman's work should be?"

["Oh! as for that—you know it isn't one out of ten who's ever entered a school, or a cottage even, except to light a cigar, before he goes into the church; and as for the examination, that's all humbug; any man may cram it all up in a month—and, thanks to King's College, I knew all I wanted to know before I went to Cambridge. And I shall be three-and-twenty by Trinity Sunday, and then in I go, neck or nothing. Only the confounded bore is, that this Bishop of London won't give one a title—won't let any man into his diocese, who has not been ordained two years; and so I shall be shoved down into some poking little country curacy, without a chance of making play before the world, or getting myself known at all. Horrid bore! isn't it?"]

"I think," I said, "considering what London is just now, the bishop's regulation seems to be one of the best specimens of episcopal wisdom that I've heard of for some time."

["Great bore for me, though, all the same: for I must make a name, I can tell you, if I intend to get on. A person must work like a horse, now-a-days, to succeed at all; and Lynedale's a desperately particular fellow, with all sorts of *outré* notions about people's duties and vocations, and heaven knows what."]

"Well," I said, "my dear cousin, and have you no high notions of a clergyman's vocation? because

we—I mean the working men—have. It's just their high idea of what a clergyman should be, which makes them so furious at clergymen for being what they are."

"It's a queer way of showing their respect to the priesthood," he answered; "to do all they can to exterminate it."

"I daresay they are liable, like other men, to confound the thing with its abuses; but if they hadn't some dim notion that the thing might be made a good thing in itself, you may depend upon it they would not rave against those abuses so fiercely." (The reader may see that I had not forgotten my conversation with Miss Staunton.) "And," thought I to myself, "is it not you, and such as you, who do so incorporate the abuses into the system, that one really cannot tell which is which, and longs to shove the whole thing aside as rotten to the core, and make a trial of something new?"

"Well, but," I said, again returning to the charge, for the subject was altogether curious and interesting to me, "do you really believe the doctrines of the Prayer-book, George?"

"Believe them!" he answered, in a tone of astonishment, "why not? I was brought up a Churchman, whatever my parents were; I was always intended for the ministry. I'd sign the Thirty-nine Articles now, against any man in the three kingdoms; and as for all the proofs out of Scripture and Church History, I've known them ever since I was sixteen—I'll get them all up again in a week as fresh as ever."

"But," I rejoined, astonished in my turn at my cousin's notion of what belief was, "have you any personal faith!—you know what I mean—I hate using cant words—but inward experience of the truth of all these great ideas, which, true or false, you will have to preach and teach? Would you live by them, die for them, as a patriot would for his country, now?"

"My dear fellow, I don't know anything about all those Methodistical, mystical, Calvinistical, inward experiences, and all that. I'm a Churchman, remember, and a High Churchman, too; and the doctrine of the Church is, that children are regenerated in holy baptism; and there's not the least doubt, from the authority both of Scripture and the fathers, that that's the——"

"For Heaven's sake," I said, "no polemical discussions! Whether you're right or wrong, that's not what I'm talking about. What I want to know is this:—you are going to teach people about God and Jesus Christ. Do you delight in God? Do you love Jesus Christ? Never mind what I do, or think, or believe. What do you do, George?"

"Well, my dear fellow, if you take things in that way, you know, of course"—and he dropped his voice into that peculiar tone, by which all sects seem to think they show their reverence; while to me, as to most other working men, it never seemed anything but a symbol of the separation and discrepancy between their daily thoughts and their religious ones—"of course, we don't any of us think of these things

half enough, and I'm sure I wish I could be more earnest than I am; but I can only hope it will come in time. The Church holds that there's a grace given in ordination; and really—really, I do hope and wish to do my duty—indeed, one can't help doing it; one is so pushed on by the immense competition for preferment; an idle parson hasn't a chance now-a-days."

"But," I asked again, half-laughing, half-disgusted, "do you know what your duty is?"

"Bless you, my good fellow, a man can't go wrong there. Carry out the Church system; that's the thing—all laid down by rule and method. A man has but to work out that—and it's the only one for the lower classes I'm convinced."

"Strange," I said, "that they have from the first been so little of that opinion, that every attempt to enforce it, for the last three hundred years, has ended either in persecution or revolution."

"Ah! that was all those vile puritans' fault. They wouldn't give the Church a chance of showing her powers."

"What! not when she had it all her own way, during the whole eighteenth century?"

"Ah! but things are very different now. The clergy are awakened now to the real beauty of the Catholic machinery; and you have no notion how much is doing in church-building and schools, and societies of every sort and kind. It is quite incredible what is being done now for the lower orders by the Church."

"I believe," I said, "that the clergy are exceedingly improved; and I believe, too, that the men to whom they owe all their improvement are the Wesleys and Whitfields—in short, the very men whom they drove one by one out of the Church, from persecution or disgust. And I do think it strange, that if so much is doing for the lower classes, the working men, who form the mass of the lower classes, are just those who scarcely feel the effects of it; while the churches seem to be filled with children, and rich and respectable, to the almost entire exclusion of the adult lower classes. A strange religion this!" I went on, "and, to judge by its effects, a very different one from that preached in Judea 1800 years ago, if we are to believe the Gospel story."

"What on earth do you mean? Is not the Church of England the very purest form of Apostolic Christianity?"

"It may be—and so may the other sects. But, somehow, in Judea, it was the publicans and harlots who pressed into the kingdom of heaven; and it was the common people who heard Christ gladly. Christianity, then, was a movement in the hearts of the lower order. But now, my dear fellow, you rich, who used to be told, in St. James's time, to weep and howl, have turned the tables upon us poor. It is *you* who are talking, all day long, of converting *us*. Look at any place of worship you like, orthodox and heretical. —Who fill the pews!—the outcast and the reprobate? No! the Pharisees and the covetous, who used to

deride Christ, fill His churches, and say still, 'This people, these masses, who know not the Gospel are accursed.' And the universal feeling, as far as I can judge, seems to be, not 'how hardly shall they who have,' but how hardly shall they who have *not*, 'riches, enter into the kingdom of heaven!'

"Upon my word," said he, laughing, "I did not give you credit for so much eloquence: you seem to have studied the Bible to some purpose, too. I didn't think that so much Radicalism could be squeezed out of a few texts of Scripture. It's quite a new light to me. I'll just mark that card, and play it when I get a convenient opportunity. It may be a winning one in these democratic times."

And he did play it, as I heard hereafter; but at present he seemed to think that the less that was said further on clerical subjects the better, and commenced quizzing the people whom we passed, humorously and neatly enough; while I walked on in silence, and thought of Mr. Bye-Ends, in the "Pilgrim's Progress." And yet I believe the man was really in earnest. He was really desirous to do what was right, as far as he knew it; and all the more desirous, because he saw, in the present state of society, what was right would pay him. God shall judge him, not I. Who can unravel the confusion of mingled selfishness and devotion that exists even in his own heart, much less in that of another?

The dean was not at home that day, having left town on business. George nodded familiarly to the footman who opened the door.

"You'll mind and send me word the moment your master comes home—mind now!"

The fellow promised obedience, and we walked away.

"You seem to be very intimate here," said I, "with all parties?"

"Oh! footmen are useful animals—a half-sovereign now and then is not altogether thrown away upon them. But as for the higher powers, it is very easy to make oneself at home in the dean's study, but not so much so as to get a footing in the drawing room above. I suspect he keeps a precious sharp eye upon the fair Miss Lillian."

"But," I asked, as a jealous pang shot through my heart, "how did you contrive to get this same footing at all? When I met you at Cambridge, you seemed already well acquainted with these people."

"How?—how does a hound get a footing on a cold scent? By working and casting about and about, and drawing on it inch by inch, as I drew on them for years, my boy; and cold enough the scent was. You recollect that day at the Dulwich Gallery? I tried to see the arms on the carriage, but there were none; so that cock wouldn't fight."

"The arms! I should never have thought of such a plan."

"Dare say you wouldn't. Then I harked back to the doorkeeper, while you were St. Sebastianising. He didn't know their names, or didn't choose to show me their ticket, on which it ought to have been;

so I went to one of the fellows whom I knew, and got him to find out. There comes out the value of money—for money makes acquaintances. Well, I found who they were.—Then I saw no chance of getting at them. But for the rest of that year at Cambridge, I beat every bush in the university, to find some one who knew them; and as fortune favours the brave, at last I hit off this Lord Lynedale; and he, of course, was the ace of trumps—a fine catch in himself, and a double catch because he was going to marry the cousin. So I made a dead set at him; and tight work I had to nab him, I can tell you, for he was three or four years older than I, and had travelled a good deal, and seen life. But every man has his weak side; and I found his was a sort of a High-Church Radicalism, and that suited me well enough, for I was always a deuce of a radical myself; so I stuck to him like a leech, and stood all his temper, and his pride, and those unpractical, windy visions of his, that made a common-sense fellow like me sick to listen to; but I stood it, and here I am."

"And what on earth induced you to stoop to all this——" meanness I was on the point of saying. "Surely you are in no want of money—your father could buy you a good living to-morrow."

"And he will, but not the one I want; and he could not buy me reputation, power, rank, do you see, Alton, my genius? And what's more, he couldn't buy me a certain little tit-bit, a jewel, worth a Jew's eye

and a half, Alton, that I set my heart on from the first moment I set my eye on it."

My heart beat fast and fierce, but he ran on—

"Do you think I'd have eaten all this dirt if it hadn't lain in my way to her? Eat dirt! I'd drink blood, Alton—though I don't often deal in strong words—if it lay in that road. I never set my heart on a thing yet, that I didn't get it at last by fair means or foul—and I'll get her! I don't care for her money, though that's a pretty plum. Upon my life, I don't. I worship her, limbs and eyes. I worship the very ground she treads on. She's a duck and a darling," said he, smacking his lips like an Ogre over his prey, "and I'll have her before I've done, so help me——"

"Whom do you mean?" I stammered out.

"Lillian, you blind beetle."

I dropped his arm—"Never, as I live!"

He started back, and burst into a horse-laugh.

"Hullo! my eye and Betty Martin! You don't mean to say that I have the honour of finding a rival in my talented cousin?"

I made no answer.

"Come, come, my dear fellow, this is too ridiculous. You and I are very good friends, and we may help each other, if we choose, like kith and kin in this here wale. So if you're fool enough to quarrel with me, I warn you I'm not fool enough to return the compliment. Only" (lowering his voice), "just bear one little thing in mind—that I am, unfortunately, of

a somewhat determined humour; and if folks will get in my way, why it's not my fault if I drive over them. You understand? Well, if you intend to be sulky, I don't. So good morning, till you feel yourself better."

And he turned gaily down a side-street and disappeared, looking taller, handsomer, manfuller than ever.

I returned home miserable; I now saw in my cousin not merely a rival, but a tyrant; and I began to hate him with that bitterness which fear alone can inspire. The eleven pounds still remained unpaid. Between three and four pounds was the utmost which I had been able to hoard up that autumn, by dint of scribbling and stinting; there was no chance of profit from my book for months to come—if indeed it ever got published, which I hardly dare believe it would; and I knew him too well to doubt that neither pity nor delicacy would restrain him from using his power over me, if I dared even to seem an obstacle in his way.

I tried to write, but could not. I found it impossible to direct my thoughts, even to sit still; a vague spectre of terror and degradation crushed me. Day after day I sat over the fire, and jumped up and went into the shop, to find something which I did not want, and peep listlessly into a dozen books, one after the other, and then wander back again to the fireside, to sit mooning and moping, starting at that horrible incubus of debt—a devil which may give mad strength to the strong, but only paralyses the weak. And I

was weak, as every poet is, more or less. There was in me, as I have somewhere read that there is in all poets, that feminine vein—a receptive as well as a creative faculty—which kept up in me a continual thirst after beauty, rest, enjoyment. And here was circumstance after circumstance goading me onwards, as the gadfly did Io, to continual wanderings, never ceasing exertions; every hour calling on me to do, while I was only longing to be—to sit and observe, and fancy, and build freely at my own will. And then—as if this necessity of perpetual petty exertion was not in itself sufficient torment—to have that accursed debt—that knowledge that I was in a rival's power, rising up like a black wall before me, to cripple, and render hopeless, for aught I knew, the very exertions to which it compelled me! I hated the bustle—the crowds; the ceaseless roar of the street outside maddened me. I longed in vain for peace—for one day's freedom—to be one hour a shepherd-boy, and lie looking up at the blue sky, without a thought beyond the rushes that I was plaiting! "Oh! that I had wings as a dove!—then would I flee away, and be at rest!"

And then, more than once or twice either, the thoughts of suicide crossed me; and I turned it over, and looked at it, and dallied with it, as a last chance in reserve. And then the thought of Lillian came, and drove away the fiend. And then the thought of my cousin came, and paralysed me again; for it told me that one hope was impossible. And then some

fresh instance of misery or oppression forced itself upon me, and made me feel the awful sacredness of my calling, as a champion of the poor, and the base cowardice of deserting them for any selfish love of rest. And then I recollected how I had betrayed my suffering brothers.—How for the sake of vanity and patronage, I had consented to hide the truth, about their rights—their wrongs. And so on through weary weeks of moping melancholy—"a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways!"

At last, Mackaye, who, as I found afterwards, had been watching all along my altered mood, contrived to worm my secret out of me. I had dreaded that whole autumn, having to tell him the truth, because I knew that his first impulse would be to pay the money instantly out of his own pocket; and my pride, as well as my sense of justice, revolted at that, and sealed my lips. But now this fresh discovery—the knowledge that it was not only in my cousin's power to crush me, but also his interest to do so—had utterly unmanned me; and after a little innocent and fruitless prevarication, out came the truth with tears of bitter shame.

The old man pursed up his lips, and, without answering me, opened his table drawer, and commenced fumbling among accounts and papers.

"No! no! no! best, noblest of friends! I will not burden you with the fruits of my own vanity and extravagance. I will starve, go to gaol sooner than take your money. If you offer it me I will leave the

house, bag and baggage, this moment. And I rose to put my threat into execution.

"I havena at present ony sic intention," answered he, deliberately, "seeing that there's na necessity for paying debits twice owre, when ye ha' the stampt receipt for them." And he put into my hands, to my astonishment and rapture, a receipt in full for the money, signed by my cousin.

Not daring to believe my own eyes, I turned it over and over, looked at it, looked at him—there was nothing but clear, smiling assurance in his beloved old face, as he twinkled, and winked, and chuckled, and pulled off his spectacles, and wiped them, and put them on upside-down; and then relieved himself by rushing at his pipe, and cramming it fiercely with tobacco till he burst the bowl.

Yes; it was no dream!—the money was paid and I was free! The sudden relief was as intolerable as the long burden had been; and, like a prisoner suddenly loosed from off the rack, my whole spirit seemed suddenly to collapse, and I sank with my head upon the table too faint even for gratitude.

. . . . . .

But who was my benefactor? Mackaye vouchsafed no answer, but that I "suld ken better than he." But when he found that I was really utterly at a loss to whom to attribute the mercy, he assured me, by way of comfort, that he was just as ignorant as myself; and at last, piecemeal, in his circumlocutory and cautious Scotch method, informed me, that some six

weeks back he had received an anonymous letter, "a'thegither o' a Belgravian cast o' phizog," containing a bank note for twenty pounds, and setting forth the writer's suspicions that I owed my cousin money, and their desire that Mr. Mackaye, "o' whose uprightness and generosity they were pleased to confess themselves no that ignorant," should write to George, ascertain the sum, and pay it without my knowledge, handing over the balance, if any, to me, when he thought fit—"Sae there's the remnant—aucht pounds, sax shillings, an' saxpence; tippence being deduckit for expense o' twa letters anent the same transaction."

"But what sort of handwriting was it?" asked I, almost disregarding the welcome coin.

"Ou, then—aiblins a man's, aiblins a maid's. He was no chirographosophic himsel—an' he had na curiosity anent ony sic passage o' aristocratic romance."

"But what was the postmark of the letter?"

"Why for suld I speired? Gin the writers had been minded to be beknown, they'd ha' sign't their names upon the document. An' gin they didna sae intend, wad it be coorteous o' me to gang speiring an' peering ower covers an' seals?"

"But where is the cover?"

"Ou, then," he went on, with the same provoking coolness, "white paper's o' geyan use, in various operations o' the domestic economy. Sae I just tare it up—aiblins for pipe-lights—I canna mind at this time."

"And why," asked I, more vexed and disappointed

than I liked to confess—"Why did you not tell me before?"

"How wad I ken that you had need o't? An' verily, I thocht it no that bad a lesson for ye, to let ye experiment a towmond mair on the precious balms that break the head—whereby I opine the Psalmist was minded to denote the delights o' spending borrowed siller."

There was nothing more to be extracted from him; so I was fain to set to work again (a pleasant compulsion truly) with a free heart, eight pounds in my pocket, and a brainful of conjectures. Was it the dean? Lord Lynedale? or was it—could it be—Lillian herself? That thought was so delicious that I made up my mind, as I had free choice among half a dozen equally improbable fancies, to determine that the most pleasant should be the true one; and hoarded the money, which I shrunk from spending as much as I should from selling her miniature or a lock of her beloved golden hair. They were a gift from her—a pledge—the first-fruits of—I dare not confess to myself what.

Whereat the reader will smile, and say, not without reason, that I was fast fitting myself for Bedlam; if, indeed, I had not proved my fitness for it already, by paying the tailors' debts, instead of my own, with the ten pounds which Farmer Porter had given me. I am not sure that he would not be correct; but so I did, and so I suffered.

CHAPTER XXV.

A TRUE NOBLEMAN.

At last my list of subscribers was completed, and my poems actually in the press. Oh! the childish joy with which I fondled my first set of proofs! And how much finer the words looked in print than they ever did in manuscript!—One took in the idea of a whole page so charmingly at a glance, instead of having to feel one's way through line after line, and sentence after sentence.—There was only one drawback to my happiness—Mackaye did not seem to sympathise with it. He had never grumbled at what I considered, and still do consider, my cardinal offence, the omission of the strong political passages; he seemed, on the contrary, in his inexplicable waywardness, to be rather pleased at it than otherwise. It was my publishing at all at which he growled.

"Ech," he said, "owre young to marry, is owre young to write; but it's the way o' these puir distractit times. [illegible], to tell it to a' the warld, as if there was never barley grown on the face o' the earth before. I wonder whether

Isaiah began to write before his beard was grown, or Dawvid either? He had mony a long year o' shepherding an' moss-trooping, an' rugging an' riving i' the wilderness, I'll warrant, afore he got thae gran' lyrics o' his oot o' him. Ye might tak example too, gin ye were minded, by Moses, the man o' God, that was joost forty years at the learning o' the Egyptians, afore he thocht gude to come forward into public life, an' then fun' to his gran' surprise, I warrant, that he'd begun forty years too sune—an' then had forty years mair, after that, o' marching an' law giving, an' bearing the burdens o' the people, before he turned poet."

"Poet, sir! I never saw Moses in that light before."

"Then ye'll just read the 90th Psalm—'the prayer o' Moses, the man o' God'—the grandest piece o' lyric, to my taste, that I ever heard o' on the face o' God's earth, an' see what a man can write that'll have the patience to wait a century or twa before he rins to the publisher's. I gie ye up fra this moment: the letting out o' ink is like the letting out o' waters, or the eating o' opium, or the getting up at public meetings.—When a man begins he canna stop. There's nae mair enslaving lust o' the flesh under the heaven than that same *furor scribendi*, as the Latins hae it."

But at last my poems were printed, and bound, and actually published; and I sat staring at a book of my own making, and wondering how it ever got into being! And what was more, the book "took," and

sold, and was reviewed in People's journals, and in newspapers; and Mackaye himself relaxed into a grin, when his oracle, the *Spectator*, the only honest paper, according to him, on the face of the earth, condescended, after asserting its impartiality by two or three searching sarcasms, to dismiss me, grimly-benignant, with a paternal pat on the shoulder. Yes—I was a real live author at last, and signed myself, by special request, in the * * * * Magazine, as "the author of Songs of the Highways." At last it struck me, and Mackaye too, who, however he hated flunkeydom, never overlooked an act of discourtesy, that it would be right for me to call upon the dean, and thank him formally for all the real kindness he had shown me. So I went to the handsome house off Harley Street, and was shown into his study, and saw my own book lying on the table, and was welcomed by the good old man, and congratulated on my success, and asked if I did not see my own wisdom in "yielding to more experienced opinions than my own, and submitting to a censorship which, however severe it might have appeared at first, was, as the event proved, benignant both in its intentions and effects?"

And then I was asked, even I, to breakfast there the next morning. And I went, and found no one there but some scientific gentlemen, to whom I was introduced as "the young man whose poems we were talking of last night." And Lillian sat at the head of the table, and poured out the coffee and tea. And between ecstasy at seeing her, and the intense relief

of not finding my dreaded and now hated cousin there, I sat in a delirium of silent joy, stealing glances at her beauty, and listening with all my ears to the conversation, which turned upon the new-married couple.

I heard endless praises, to which I could not but assent in silence, of Lord Ellerton's perfections. His very personal appearance had been enough to captivate my fancy; and then they went on to talk of his magnificent philanthropic schemes, and his deep sense of the high duties of a landlord; and how, finding himself, at his father's death, the possessor of two vast but neglected estates, he had sold one in order to be able to do justice to the other, instead of laying house to house, and field to field, like most of his compeers, "till he stood alone in the land, and there was no place left;" and how he had lowered his rents, even though it had forced him to put down the ancestral pack of hounds, and live in a corner of the old castle; and how he was draining, claying, breaking up old moorlands, and building churches, and endowing schools, and improving cottages; and how he was expelling the old ignorant bankrupt race of farmers, and advertising everywhere for men of capital, and science, and character, who would have courage to cultivate flax and silk, and try every species of experiment; and how he had one scientific farmer after another, staying in his house as a friend; and how he had numbers of his books rebound in plain covers, that he might lend them to every one on his estate who wished to read them; and how he had

thrown open his picture gallery, not only to the inhabitants of the neighbouring town, but what (strange to say) seemed to strike the party as still more remarkable, to the labourers of his own village; and how he was at that moment busy transforming an old unoccupied manor-house into a great associate farm, in which all the labourers were to live under one roof, with a common kitchen and dining-hall, clerks and superintendents, whom they were to choose, subject only to his approval, and all of them, from the least to the greatest, have their own interest in the farm, and be paid by percentage on the profits; and how he had one of the first political economists of the day staying with him, in order to work out for him tables of proportionate remuneration, applicable to such an agricultural establishment; and how, too, he was giving the spade-labour system a fair trial, by laying out small cottage-farms, on rocky knolls and sides of glens, too steep to be cultivated by the plough; and was locating on them the most intelligent artisans whom he could draft from the manufacturing town hard by——

And at that notion, my brain grew giddy with the hope of seeing myself one day in one of those same cottages, tilling the earth, under God's sky, and perhaps—— And then a whole cloud-world of love, freedom, fame, simple, graceful country luxury steamed up across my brain, to end—not, like the man's in the "Arabian Nights," in my kicking over the tray of China, which formed the base-point of my inverted

pyramid of hope—but in my finding the contents of my plate deposited in my lap, while I was gazing fixedly at Lillian.

I must say for myself, though, that such accidents happened seldom; whether it was bashfulness, or the tact which generally, I believe, accompanies a weak and nervous body, and an active mind; or whether it was that I possessed enough relationship to the monkey-tribe to make me a first-rate mimic, I used to get tolerably well through on these occasions, by acting on the golden rule of never doing anything which I had not seen some one else do first—a rule which never brought me into any greater scrape than swallowing something intolerably hot, sour and nasty (whereof I never discovered the name), because I had seen the dean do so a moment before.

But one thing struck me through the whole of this conversation—the way in which the new-married Lady Ellerton was spoken of, as aiding, encouraging, originating—a helpmeet, if not an oracular guide, for her husband—in all these noble plans. She had already acquainted herself with every woman on the estate; she was the dispenser, not merely of alms—for those seemed a disagreeable necessity, from which Lord Ellerton was anxious to escape as soon as possible—but of advice, comfort and encouragement. She not only visited the sick, and taught in the schools—avocations which, thank God, I have reason to believe are matters of course, not only in the families of clergymen, but those of most squires and noblemen, when

they reside on their estates—but seemed, from the hints which I gathered, to be utterly devoted, body and soul, to the welfare of the dwellers on her husband's land.

"I had no notion," I dared at last to remark, humbly enough, "that Miss—Lady Ellerton cared so much for the people."

"Really! One feels inclined sometimes to wish that she cared for anything besides them," said Lillian, half to her father and half to me.

This gave a fresh shake to my estimate of that remarkable woman's character. But still, who could be prouder, more imperious, more abrupt in manner, harsh even to the very verge of good-breeding? (for I had learnt what good-breeding was, from the debating society as well as from the drawing-room;) and, above all, had she not tried to keep me from Lillian? But these cloudy thoughts melted rapidly away in that sunny atmosphere of success and happiness, and I went home as merry as a bird, and wrote all the morning more gracefully and sportively, as I fancied, than I had ever yet done.

But my bliss did not end here. In a week or so, behold one morning a note—written, indeed, by the dean—but directed in Lillian's own hand, inviting me to come there to tea, that I might see a few of the literary characters of the day.

I covered the envelope with kisses, and thrust it next my fluttering heart. I then proudly showed the note to Mackaye. He looked pleased, yet pensive,

and then broke out with a fresh adaptation of his favourite song,

"'———and shovel hats and a' that—
A man's a man for a' that.'

"The auld gentleman is a man and a gentleman; an' has made a verra courteous, an' weel considerit move, gin ye ha' the sense to profit by it, an' no turn it to yer ain destruction."

"Destruction?"

"Ay—that's the word, an' nothing less, laddie!"

And he went into the outer shop, and returned with a volume of Bulwer's "Ernest Maltravers."

"What! are you a novel reader, Mr. Mackaye?"

"How do ye ken what I may ha' thocht gude to read in my time? Ye'll be pleased the noo to sit down an' begin at that page—an read, mark, learn, an' inwardly digest, the history of Castruccio Cesarini —an' the gude God gie ye grace to lay the same to heart."

I read that fearful story; and my heart sunk, and my eyes were full of tears, long ere I had finished it. Suddenly I looked up at Mackaye, half angry at the pointed allusion to my own case.

The old man was watching me intently, with folded hands, and a smile of solemn interest and affection worthy of Socrates himself. He turned his head as I looked up, but his lips kept moving. I fancied, I know not why, that he was praying for me.

The tea: Alton meets Eleanor, Lillian & the German ambassador & hear of Lord Ellerton's death.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRIUMPHANT AUTHOR.

So to the party I went, and had the delight of seeing and hearing the men with whose names I had been long acquainted, as the leaders of scientific discovery in this wondrous age; and more than one poet, too, over whose works I had gloated, whom I had worshipped in secret. Intense was the pleasure of now realising to myself, as living men, wearing the same flesh and blood as myself, the names which had been to me mythic ideas. Lillian was there among them, more exquisite than ever; but even she at first attracted my eyes and thoughts less than did the truly great men around her. I hung on every word they spoke, I watched every gesture, as if they must have some deep significance; the very way in which they drank their coffee was a matter of interest to me. I was almost disappointed to see them eat and chat like common men. I expected that pearls and diamonds would drop from their lips, as they did from those of the girl, in the fairy-tale, every time they opened their mouths; and certainly, the conversation that evening was a new world to me—though I could only, of course, be a

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listener. Indeed, I wished to be nothing more. I felt that I was taking my place there among the holy guild of authors—that I too, however humbly, had a thing to say, and had said it; and I was content to sit on the lowest step of the literary temple, without envy for those elder and more practised priests of wisdom, who had earned by long labour the freedom of the inner shrine. I should have been quite happy enough standing there, looking and listening—but I was at last forced to come forward. Lillian was busy chatting with grave, grey-headed men, who seemed as ready to flirt, and pet and admire the lovely little fairy, as if they had been as young and gay as herself. It was enough for me to see her appreciated and admired. I loved them for smiling on her, for handing her from her seat to the piano with reverent courtesy; gladly would I have taken their place: I was content, however, to be only a spectator; for it was not my rank, but my youth, I was glad to fancy, which denied me that blissful honour. But as she sang, I could not help stealing up to the piano; and, feasting my greedy eyes with every motion of those delicious lips, listen and listen, entranced, and living only in that melody.

Suddenly, after singing two or three songs, she began fingering the keys, and struck into an old air, wild and plaintive, rising and falling like the swell of an Æolian harp upon a distant breeze.

"Ah! now," she said, "if I could get words for that! What an exquisite lament somebody might

write to it, if they could only thoroughly take in the feeling and meaning of it."

"Perhaps," I said, humbly, "that is the only way to write songs—to let some air get possession of one's whole soul, and gradually inspire the words for itself; as the old Hebrew prophets had music played before them, to wake up the prophetic spirit within them."

She looked up, just as if she had been unconscious of my presence till that moment.

"Ah! Mr. Locke!—well, if you understand my meaning so thoroughly, perhaps you will try and write some words for me."

"I am afraid that I do not enter sufficiently into the meaning of the air."

"Oh! then, listen while I play it over again. I am sure *you* ought to appreciate anything so sad and tender."

And she did play it, to my delight, over again, even more gracefully and carefully than before—making the inarticulate sounds speak a mysterious train of thoughts and emotions. [It is strange how little real intellect, in women especially, is required for an exquisite appreciation of the beauties of music—perhaps, because it appeals to the heart and not the head.]

She rose and left the piano, saying archly, "Now, don't forget your promise;" and I, poor fool, my sunlight suddenly withdrawn, began torturing my brains on the instant to think of a subject.

As it happened, my attention was caught by hear-

ing two gentlemen close to me discuss a beautiful sketch by Copley Fielding, if I recollect rightly, which hung on the wall—a wild waste of tidal sands, with here and there a line of stake-nets fluttering in the wind—a grey shroud of rain sweeping up from the westward, through which low red cliffs glowed dimly in the rays of the setting sun—a train of horses and cattle splashing slowly through shallow desolate pools and creeks, their wet, red, and black hides glittering in one long line of level light.

They seemed thoroughly conversant with art; and as I listened to their criticisms, I learnt more in five minutes about the characteristics of a really true and good picture, and about the perfection to which our unrivalled English landscape-painters have attained, than I ever did from all the books and criticisms which I had read. One of them had seen the spot represented, at the mouth of the Dee, and began telling wild stories of salmon-fishing, and wild-fowl shooting—and then a tale of a girl, who, in bringing her father's cattle home across the sands, had been caught by a sudden flow of the tide, and found next day a corpse hanging among the stake-nets far below. The tragedy, the art of the picture, the simple, dreary grandeur of the scenery, took possession of me; and I stood gazing a long time, and fancying myself pacing the sands, and wondering whether there were shells upon it—I had often longed for once only in my life to pick up shells—when Lady Ellerton, whom I had not before noticed, woke me from my reverie.

I took the liberty of asking after Lord Ellerton.

"He is not in town—he has stayed behind for one day to attend a great meeting of his tenantry—you will see the account in the papers to-morrow morning—he comes to-morrow." And as she spoke her whole face and figure seemed to glow and heave, in spite of herself, with pride and affection.

"And now, come with me, Mr. Locke—the * * * ambassador wishes to speak to you."

"The * * * ambassador!" I said, startled; for let us be as democratic as we will, there is something in the name of great officers which awes, perhaps rightly, for the moment, and it requires a strong act of self-possession to recollect that "a man's a man for a' that." Besides, I knew enough of the great man in question to stand in awe of him for his own sake, having lately read a panegyric of him, which perfectly astounded me, by its description of his piety and virtue, his family affection, and patriarchal simplicity, the liberality and philanthropy of all his measures, and the enormous intellectual powers, and stores of learning, which enabled him, with the affairs of Europe on his shoulders, to write deeply and originally on the most abstruse questions of theology, history, and science.

Lady Ellerton seemed to guess my thoughts. "You need not be afraid of meeting an aristocrat, in the vulgar sense of the word. You will see one who, once perhaps as unknown as yourself, has risen by virtue and wisdom to guide the destinies of nations—

and shall I tell you how? Not by fawning and yielding to the fancies of the great; not by compromising his own convictions to suit their prejudices——"

I felt the rebuke, but she went on—

"He owes his greatness to having dared, one evening, to contradict a crown-prince to his face, and fairly conquer him in argument, and thereby bind the truly royal heart to him for ever."

"There are few scions of royalty to whose favour that would be a likely path."

"True; and therefore the greater honour is due to the young student who could contradict, and the prince who could be contradicted."

By this time we had arrived in the great man's presence; he was sitting with a little circle round him, in the further drawing-room, and certainly I never saw a nobler specimen of humanity. I felt myself at once before a hero—not of war and bloodshed, but of peace and civilisation; his portly and ample figure, fair hair and delicate complexion, and, above all, the benignant calm of his countenance, told of a character gentle and genial—at peace with himself and all the world; while the exquisite proportion of his chiselled and classic features, the lofty and ample brain, and the keen, thoughtful eye, bespoke, at the first glance, refinement and wisdom—

> "The reason firm, the temperate will—
> Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill."

I am not ashamed to say, Chartist as I am, that I felt

inclined to fall upon my knees, and own a master of God's own making.

He received my beautiful guide with a look of chivalrous affection, which I observed that she returned with interest; and then spoke in a voice peculiarly bland and melodious:

"So, my dear lady, this is the *protégé* of whom you have so often spoken?"

So she had often spoken of me! Blind fool that I was, I only took it in as food for my own self-conceit, that my enemy (for so I actually fancied her) could not help praising me.

"I have read your little book, sir," he said, in the same soft, benignant voice, "with very great pleasure. It is another proof, if I required any, of the undercurrent of living and healthful thought which exists even in the less-known ranks of your great nation. I shall send it to some young friends of mine in Germany, to show them that Englishmen can feel acutely and speak boldly on the social evils of their country, without indulging in that frantic and bitter revolutionary spirit, which warps so many young minds among us. You understand the German language at all?"

I had not that honour.

"Well, you must learn it. We have much to teach you in the sphere of abstract thought, as you have much to teach us in those of the practical reason and the knowledge of mankind. I should be glad to see you some day in a German university. I am anxious

to encourage a truly spiritual fraternisation between the two great branches of the Teutonic stock, by welcoming all brave young English spirits to their ancient fatherland. Perhaps hereafter your kind friends here will be able to lend you to me. The means are easy, thank God! You will find in the Germans true brothers, in ways even more practical than sympathy and affection."

I could not but thank the great man, with many blushes, and went home that night utterly "*tête montée*," as I believe the French phrase is—beside myself with gratified vanity and love; to lie sleepless under a severe fit of asthma—sent perhaps as a wholesome chastisement to cool my excited spirits down to something like a rational pitch. As I lay castle-building, Lillian's wild air rang still in my ears, and combined itself somehow with that picture of the Cheshire sands, and the story of the drowned girl, till it shaped itself into a song, which, as it is yet unpublished, and as I have hitherto obtruded little or nothing of my own composition on my readers, I may be excused for inserting it here.

I.

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee;"
The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

II.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land—
And never home came she.

III.

"Oh, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drowned maiden's hair,
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
Among the stakes on Dee."

IV.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee.

There—let it go!—it was meant as an offering for one whom it never reached.

About mid-day I took my way towards the dean's house, to thank him for his hospitality—and, I need not say, to present my offering at my idol's shrine; and as I went, I conned over a dozen complimentary speeches about Lord Ellerton's wisdom, liberality, eloquence—but behold! the shutters of the house were closed. What could be the matter? It was full ten minutes before the door was opened; and then, at last, an old woman, her eyes red with weep-

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ing, made her appearance. My thoughts flew instantly to Lillian—something must have befallen her. I gasped out her name first, and then, recollecting myself, asked for the dean.

"They had all left town that morning."

"Miss—Miss Winnstay—is she ill?"

"No."

"Thank God!" I breathed freely again. What matter what happened to all the world beside?

"Ay, thank God, indeed; but poor Lord [illegible]ton was thrown from his horse last night and brought home dead. A messenger came here by six this morning, and they're all gone off to * * * * Her ladyship's raving mad.—And no wonder." And she burst out crying afresh, and shut the door in my face.

Lord Ellerton dead! and Lillian gone too! Something whispered that I should have cause to remember that day. My heart sunk within me. When should I see her again?

That day was the first of June 1845. On the 10th of April 1848, I saw Lillian Winnstay again. Dare I write my history between those two points of time? Yes, even that must be done, for the sake of the rich who read, and the poor who suffer.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PLUSH BREECHES TRAGEDY.

My triumph had received a cruel check enough when just at its height, and more were appointed to follow. Behold! some two days after, another—all the more bitter, because my conscience whispered that it was not altogether undeserved. The people's press had been hitherto praising and petting me lovingly enough. I had been classed (and heaven knows that the comparison was dearer to me than all the applause of the wealthy) with the Corn-Law rhymer, and the author of the "Purgatory of Suicides." My class had claimed my talents as their own—another "voice fresh from the heart of nature," another "untutored songster of the wilderness," another "prophet arisen among the suffering millions,"—when, one day, behold in Mr. O'Flynn's paper a long and fierce attack on me, my poems, my early history! How he could have got at some of the facts there mentioned, how he could have dared to inform his readers that I had broken my mother's heart by my misconduct, I cannot conceive; unless my worthy brother-in-law, the Baptist preacher, had been kind enough to furnish

him with the materials. But however that may be, he showed me no mercy. I was suddenly discovered to be a time-server, a spy, a concealed aristocrat. Such paltry talent as I had, I had prostituted for the sake of fame. I had deserted The People's Cause for filthy lucre—an allurement which Mr. O'Flynn had always treated with withering scorn—*in print*. Nay, more, I would write, and notoriously did write, in any paper, Whig, Tory, or Radical, where I could earn a shilling by an enormous gooseberry, or a scrap of private slander. And the working men were solemnly warned to beware of me and my writings, till the editor had further investigated certain ugly facts in my history, which he would in due time report to his patriotic and enlightened readers.

All this stung me in the most sensitive nerve of my whole heart, for I knew that I could not altogether exculpate myself; and to that miserable certainty was added the dread of some fresh exposure. Had he actually heard of the omissions in my poems?—and if he once touched on that subject, what could I answer? Oh! how bitterly now I felt the force of the critic's careless lash! The awful responsibility of those written words, which we bandy about so thoughtlessly! How I recollected now, with shame and remorse, all the hasty and cruel utterances to which I, too, had given vent against those who had dared to differ from me; the harsh, one-sided judgments, the reckless imputations of motive, the bitter sneers, "rejoicing in evil rather than in the truth."

How I, too, had longed to prove my victims in the wrong, and turned away, not only lazily, but angrily, from many an exculpatory fact! And here was my Nemesis come at last. As I had done unto others, so it was done unto me!

It was right that it should be so. However indignant, mad, almost murderous, I felt at the time, I thank God for it now. It is good to be punished in kind. It is good to be made to feel what we have made others feel. It is good—anything is good, however bitter, which shows us that there is such a law as retribution; that we are not the sport of blind chance or a triumphant fiend, but that there is a God who judges the earth—righteous to repay every man according to his works.

But at the moment I had no such ray of comfort—and, full of rage and shame, I dashed the paper down before Mackaye. "How shall I answer him? What shall I say?"

The old man read it all through with a grim saturnine smile.

"Hoots, hoots, speech is o' silver—silence is o' gold, says Thomas Carlyle, anent this an' ither matters. Wha'd be fashed wi' sic blethers? Ye'll just abide patient, and haud still in the Lord, until this tyranny be owerpast. Commit your cause to him, said the auld Psalmist, an' he'll mak your righteousness as clear as the light, an' your just dealing as the noon-day."

"But I must explain; I owe it as a duty to myself;

I must refute these charges; I must justify myself to our friends."

"Can ye do that same, laddie?" asked he, with one of his quaint, searching looks. Somehow I blushed, and could not altogether meet his eye, while he went on, "——An' gin ye could, whaur would ye do 't? I ken na periodical whar the editor will gie ye a clear stage an' no favour to bang him ower the lugs."

"Then I will try some other paper."

"An' what for then? They that read him, winna read the ither; an' they that read the ither, winna read him. He has his ain set o' dupes like every ither editor; an' ye mun let him gang his gate, an' feed his ain kye with his ain hay. He'll no change it for your bidding."

"What an abominable thing this whole business of the press is then, if each editor is to be allowed to humbug his readers at his pleasure, without a possibility of exposing or contradicting him!"

"An' ye've just spoken the truth, laddie. There's no more [illegible] than this of these self-elected pupils, the editors. That puir auld Roman ane, ye can bring him forat when ye list, bad as he is. 'Fœnum habet in cornu;' his name's ower his shop-door. But these anonymies—priests o' the order of Melchisedec by the deevil's side, without father or mither, beginning o' years nor end o' days—without a local habitation or a name—as kittle to haud as a brock in a cairn——"

"What do you mean, Mr. Mackaye?" asked I, for he was getting altogether unintelligibly Scotch, as was his custom when excited.

"Ou, I forgot; ye're a puir Southern body, an' no sensible to the gran' metaphoric powers o' the true Dawric. But it's an accursit state a'thegither, the noo, this, o' the anonymous press—oreeginally devised, ye ken, by Balaam the son o' Beor, for serving God wi'out the deevil's finding it out—an' noo, after the way o' human institutions, translated ower to help folks to serve the deevil without God's finding it out. I'm no' astonished at the puir expiring religious press for siccan a fa'; but for the working men to be a' that's bad—it's grewsome to behold. I'll tell ye what, my bairn, there's na salvation for the workmen, while they defile themselves this fashion, wi' a' the very idols o' their ain tyrants—wi' salvation by act o' parliament—irresponsible rights o' property—anonymous Balaamry—fechtin' that canny auld farrant fiend, Mammon, wi' his ain weapons—and then a' fleyed, because they get well beaten for their pains. I'm sair forfaughten this mony a year wi' watching the puir gowks, trying to do God's wark wi' the deevil's tools. Tak tent o' that."

And I did "tak tent o' it." Still there would have been as little present consolation as usual in Mackaye's unwelcome truths, even if the matter had stopped there. But, alas! it did not stop there. O'Flynn seemed determined to "run a muck" at me. Every week some fresh attack appeared. The very passages

about the universities and church property, which had caused our quarrel, were paraded against me, with free additions and comments; and, at last, to my horror, out came the very story which I had all along dreaded, about the expurgation of my poems, with the coarsest allusions to petticoat influence—aristocratic kisses—and the Duchess of Devonshire canvassing draymen for Fox, etc. etc. How he got a clue to the scandal I cannot conceive. Mackaye and Crossthwaite, I had thought, were the only souls to whom I had ever breathed the secret, and they denied indignantly the having ever betrayed my weakness. How it came out, I say again, I cannot conceive; except because it is a great everlasting law, and sure to fulfil itself sooner or later, as we may see by the histories of every remarkable, and many an unremarkable, man—"There is nothing secret, but it shall be made manifest; and whatsoever ye have spoken in the closet, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

For some time after that last exposure, I was thoroughly crestfallen—and not without reason. I had been giving a few lectures among the working men, on various literary and social subjects. I found my audience decrease—and those who remained seemed more inclined to hiss than to applaud me. In vain I ranted and quoted poetry, often more violently than my own opinions justified. My words touched no responsive chord in my hearers' hearts; they had lost faith in me.

At last, in the middle of a lecture on Shelley, I

was indulging, and honestly too, in some very glowing and passionate praise of the true nobleness of a man, whom neither birth nor education could blind to the evils of society; who, for the sake of the suffering many, could trample under foot his hereditary pride, and become an outcast for the People's Cause.

I heard a whisper close to me, from one whose opinion I valued, and value still—a scholar and a poet, one who had tasted poverty, and slander, and a prison, for The Good Cause:

"Fine talk: but it's 'all in his day's work.' Will he dare to say that to-morrow to the ladies at the West-end?"

No—I should not. I knew it; and at that instant I felt myself a liar, and stopped short—my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I fumbled at my papers—clutched the water-tumbler—tried to go on—stopped short again—caught up my hat, and rushed from the room, amid peals of astonished laughter.

It was some months after this that, fancying the storm blown over, I summoned up courage enough to attend a political meeting of our party; but even there my Nemesis met full face. After some sanguinary speech, I really forgot from whom, and, if I recollected, God forbid that I should tell now, I dared to controvert, mildly enough, Heaven knows, some especially frantic assertion or other. But before I could get out three sentences, O'Flynn flew at me with a coarse invective, hounded on, by-the-by, by one who, calling himself a gentleman, might have been

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expected to know better. But, indeed, he and O'Flynn had the same object in view, which was simply to sell their paper; and as a means to that great end, to pander to the fiercest passions of their readers, to bully and silence all moderate and rational Chartists, and pet and tar on the physical-force men, till the poor fellows began to take them at their word. Then, when it came to deeds and not to talk, and people got frightened, and the sale of the paper decreased a little, a blessed change came over them—and they awoke one morning meeker than lambs; "ulterior measures" had vanished back into the barbarous ages, pikes, vitriol-bottles, and all; and the public were entertained with nothing but homilies on patience and resignation, the "triumphs of moral justice," the "omnipotence of public opinion," and the "gentle conquests of fraternal love"—till it was safe to talk treason and slaughter again.

But just then treason happened to be at a premium. Sedition, which had been floundering on in a confused, disconsolate, underground way ever since 1842, was supposed by the public to be dead; and for that very reason it was safe to talk it, or, at least, back up those who chose to do so. And so I got no quarter—though really, if the truth must be told, I had said nothing unreasonable.

Home I went disgusted, to toil on at my hack-writing, only praying that I might be let alone to scribble in peace, and often thinking, sadly, how little my friends in Harley Street could guess at the painful

experience, the doubts, the struggles, the bitter cares, which went to the making of the poetry which they admired so much!

I was not, however, left alone to scribble in peace, either by O'Flynn, or by his readers, who formed, alas! just then, only too large a portion of the thinking artisans; every day brought some fresh slight or annoyance with it, till I received one afternoon, by the Parcels Delivery Company, a large unpaid packet, containing, to my infinite disgust, an old pair of yellow plush breeches, with a recommendation to wear them, whose meaning could not be mistaken.

Furious, I thrust the unoffending garment into the fire, and held it there with the tongs, regardless of the horrible smell which accompanied its martyrdom, till the lady-lodger on the first floor rushed down to inquire whether the house was on fire.

I answered by hurling a book at her head, and brought down a volley of abuse, under which I sat in sulky patience, till Mackaye and Crossthwaite came in, and found her railing in the doorway, and me sitting over the fire, still intent on the frizzling remains of the breeches.

"Was this insult of your invention, Mr. Crossthwaite?" asked I, in a tone of lofty indignation, holding up the last scrap of unroasted plush.

Roars of laughter from both of them made me only more frantic, and I broke out so incoherently, that it was some time before the pair could make out the cause of my fury.

"Upon my honour, Locke," quoth John, at last, holding his sides, "I never sent them; though, on the whole—you've made my stomach ache with laughing. I can't speak. But you must expect a joke or two, after your late fashionable connections."

I stood, still and white with rage.

"Really, my good fellow, how can you wonder if our friends suspect you? Can you deny that you've been off and on lately between flunkeydom and The Cause, like a donkey between two bundles of hay? Have you not neglected our meetings! Have you not picked all the spice out of your poems? And can you expect to eat your cake and keep it too? You must be one thing or the other; and, though Sandy, here, is too kind-hearted to tell you, you have disappointed us both miserably—and there's the long and short of it."

I hid my face in my hands, and sat moodily over the fire; my conscience told me that I had nothing to answer.

"Whisht, Johnnie! Ye're ower sair on the lad. He's a' right at heart still, an he'll do good service. But the deevil a'ways fechts hardest wi' them he's maist 'feard of. What's this anent agricultural distress ye had to tell me the noo?"

"There is a rising down in the country, a friend of mine writes me. The people are starving, not because bread is dear, but because it's cheap; and, like sensible men, they're going to have a great meeting, to inquire the rights and wrong of all that. Now,

I want to send a deputation down, to see how far they are inclined to go, and let them know we up in London are with them. And then we might get up a corresponding association, you know. It's a great opening for spreading the principles of the Charter."

"I sair misdoubt, it's just bread they'll be wanting, they labourers, mair than liberty. Their God is their belly, I'm thinking, and a verra poor empty idol he is the noo; sma' burnt offerings and fat o' rams he gets to propitiate him. But ye might send down a canny body, just to spy out the nakedness o' the land."

"I will go," I said, starting up. "They shall see that I do care for The Cause. If it's a dangerous mission, so much the better. It will prove my sincerity. Where is the place?"

"About ten miles from D * * * *."

"D * * * *!" My heart sank. If it had been any other spot in England! But it was too late to retract. Sandy saw what was the matter, and tried to turn the subject; but I was peremptory, almost rude with him. I felt I must keep up my present excitement, or lose my heart, and my caste, for ever; and as the hour for the committee was at hand, I jumped up and set off thither with them, whether they would or not. I heard Sandy whisper to Crossthwaite, and turned quite fiercely on him.

"If you want to speak about me, speak out. If you fancy that I shall let my connection with that place" (I could not bring myself to name it) "stand in the way of my duty, you do not know me."

At a chartist meeting. Alton volunteers to go to an agricultural gathering at D—.

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I announced my intention at the meeting. It was at first received coldly; but I spoke energetically—perhaps, as some told me afterwards, actually eloquently. When I got heated, I alluded to my former stay at D * * * *, and said (while my heart sank at the bravado which I was uttering) that I should consider it a glory to retrieve my character with them, and devote myself to the cause of the oppressed, in the very locality whence had first arisen their unjust and pardonable suspicions. In short, generous trusting hearts as they were, and always are, I talked them round; they shook me by the hand one by one, bade me God speed, told me that I stood higher than ever in their eyes, and then set to work to vote money from their funds for my travelling expenses, which I magnanimously refused, saying that I had a pound or two left from the sale of my poems, and that I must be allowed, as an act of repentance and restitution, to devote it to The Cause.

My triumph was complete. Even O'Flynn, who, like all Irishmen, had plenty of loose good-nature at bottom, and was as sudden and furious in his loves as in his hostilities, scrambled over the benches, regardless of patriots' toes, to shake me violently by the hand, and inform me that I was "a broth of a boy," and that "any little disagreements between us had vanished like a passing cloud from the sunshine of our fraternity"—when my eye was caught by a face which there was no mistaking—my cousin's!

Yes, there he sat, watching me like a basilisk, with

his dark, glittering, mesmeric eyes, out of a remote corner of the room—not in contempt or anger, but there was a quiet, assured, sardonic smile about his lips, which chilled me to the heart.

The meeting was sufficiently public to allow of his presence, but how had he found out its existence? Had he come there as a spy on me? Had he been in the room when my visit to D * * * * was determined on? I trembled at the thought; and I trembled, too, lest he should be daring enough—and I knew he could dare anything—to claim acquaintance with me there and then. It would have ruined my new-restored reputation for ever. But he sat still and steady: and I had to go through the rest of the evening's business under the miserable, cramping knowledge that every word and gesture was being noted down by my most deadly enemy; trembling whenever I was addressed, lest some chance word of an acquaintance would implicate me still further—though, indeed, I was deep enough already. The meeting seemed interminable; and there I fidgeted, with my face scarlet—always seeing those basilisk eyes upon me—in fancy—for I dared not look again towards the corner where I knew they were.

At last it was over—the audience went out; and when I had courage to look round, my cousin had vanished among them. A load was taken off my breast, and I breathed freely again—for five minutes;—for I had not made ten steps up the street, when an arm was familiarly thrust through

mine, and I found myself in the clutches of my evil genius.

"How are you, my dear fellow? Expected to meet you there. Why, what an orator you are! Really, I haven't heard more fluent or passionate English this month of Sundays. You must give me a lesson in sermon-preaching. I can tell you, we parsons want a hint or two in that line. So you're going down to D * * * *, to see after those poor starving labourers? 'Pon my honour, I've a great mind to go with you."

So, then, he knew all! However, there was nothing for it but to brazen it out; and, besides, it was in his power, and however hateful to me his seeming cordiality might be, I dared not offend him at that moment.

"It would be well if you did. If you parsons would show yourselves at such places as these a little oftener, you would do more to make the people believe your mission real, than by all the tracts and sermons in the world."

"But, my dear cousin" (and he began to snuffle and sink his voice), "there is so much sanguinary language, so much unsanctified impatience, you frighten away all the meek apostolic men among the priesthood—the very ones who feel most for the lost sheep of the flock."

"Then the parsons are either great Pharisees or great cowards, or both."

"Very likely. I was in a precious fright myself, I

know, when I saw you recognised me. If I had not felt strengthened, you know, as of course one ought to be in all trials, by the sense of my holy calling, I think I should have bolted at once. However, I took the precaution of bringing my Bowie and revolver with me, in case the worst came to the worst."

"And a very needless precaution it was," said I, half laughing at the quaint incongruity of the priestly and the lay elements in his speech. "You don't seem to know much of working men's meetings, or working men's morals. Why, that place was open to all the world. The proceedings will be in the newspaper to-morrow. The whole bench of bishops might have been there, if they had chosen; and a great deal of good it would have done them!"

"I fully agree with you, my dear fellow. No one hates the bishops more than we true high-churchmen, I can tell you—that's a great point of sympathy between us and the people. But I must be off. By-the-by, would you like me to tell our friends at D * * * * that I met you? They often ask after you in their letters, I assure you."

This was a sting of complicated bitterness. I felt all that it meant at once. So he was in constant correspondence with them, while I——and that thought actually drove out of my head the more pressing danger of his utterly ruining me in their esteem, by telling them, as he had a very good right to do, that I was going to preach Chartism to discontented mobs.

"Ah! well! perhaps you wouldn't wish it men-

tioned? As you like, you know. Or, rather," and he laid an iron grasp on my arm, and dropped his voice—this time in earnest—"as you behave, my wise and loyal cousin! Good night."

I went home—the excitement of self-applause, which the meeting had called up, damped by a strange weight of foreboding. And yet I could not help laughing, when, just as I was turning into bed, Crossthwaite knocked at my door, and, on being admitted, handed over to me a bundle wrapped up in paper.

"There s a pair of breeks for you—not plush ones, this time, old fellow—but you ought to look as smart as possible. There's so much in a man's looking dignified, and all that, when he's speechifying. So I've just brought you down my best black trousers to travel in. We're just of a size, you know; little and good, like a Welshman's cow. And if you tear them, why, we're not like poor, miserable, useless aristocrats; tailors and sailors can mend their own rents." And he vanished, whistling the "Marseillaise."

I went to bed and tossed about, fancying to myself my journey, my speech, the faces of the meeting, among which Lillian's would rise, in spite of all the sermons which I preached to myself on the impossibility of her being there, of my being known, of any harm happening from the movement; but I could not shake off the fear. If there were a riot, a rising! —If any harm were to happen to her! If—— Till, mobbed into fatigue by a rabble of such miserable

hypothetic ghosts, I fell asleep, to dream that I was going to be hanged for sedition, and that the mob were all staring and hooting at me, and Lillian clapping her hands and setting them on; and I woke in an agony, to find Sandy Mackaye standing by my bedside with a light.

"Hoolie, laddie! ye need na jump up that way. I'm no' gaun to burke ye the nicht; but I canna sleep; I'm sair misdoubtful o' the thing. It seems a' richt, an' I've been praying for us, an' that's mickle for me, to be taught our way; but I dinna see aught for ye but to gang. If your heart is richt with God in this matter, then he's o' your side, an' I fear na what men may do to ye. An' yet, ye're my Joseph, as it were, the son o' my auld age, wi' a coat o' many colours, plush breeks included; an' gin aught take ye, ye'll bring down my grey haffets wi' sorrow to the grave!"

The old man gazed at me as he spoke, with a deep earnest affection I had never seen in him before; and the tears glistened in his eyes by the flaring candle-light, as he went on:

"I ha' been reading the Bible the nicht. It's strange how the words o't rise up, and open themselves whiles, to puir distractit bodies; though, maybe, no' always in just the orthodox way. An' I fell on that, 'Behold I send ye forth as lambs in the midst o' wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents an' harmless as doves;' an' that gave me comfort, laddie, for ye.] Mind the warning, dinna gang wud, whatever ye may see an' hear; it's an ill way o' showing pity,

to gang daft anent it. Dinna talk magniloquently; that's the workman's darling sin.] An' mind ye dinna go too deep wi' them. Ye canna trust them to understand ye; they're puir foolish sheep that ha' no shepherd—swine that ha' no wash, rather. So cast na your pearls before swine, laddie, lest they trample them under their feet, an' turn again an' rend ye."

He went out, and I lay awake tossing till morning, making a thousand good resolutions—like the rest of mankind.

Part V.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MEN WHO ARE EATEN.

WITH many instructions from our friends, and warnings from Mackaye, I started next day on my journey. When I last caught sight of the old man, he was gazing fixedly after me, and using his pocket-handkerchief in a somewhat suspicious way. I had remarked how depressed he seemed, and my own spirits shared the depression. A presentiment of evil hung over me, which not even the excitement of the journey—to me a rare enjoyment—could dispel. I had no heart, somehow, to look at the country scenes around, which in general excited in me so much interest, and I tried to lose myself in summing up my stock of information on the question which I expected to hear discussed by the labourers. I found myself not altogether ignorant. The horrible disclosures of S. G. O., and the barbarous abominations of the Andover Workhouse, then fresh in the public mind, had had their due effect on mine; and, like most thinking artisans, I had acquainted myself tolerably from books and newspapers with the general condition of the country labourers.

1 place

I arrived in the midst of a dreary, treeless country, whose broad brown and grey fields were only broken by an occasional line of dark, doleful firs, at a knot of thatched hovels, all sinking and leaning every way but the right, the windows patched with paper, the doorways stopped with filth, which surrounded a beer-shop. That was my destination—unpromising enough for any one but an agitator. If discontent and misery are preparatives for liberty—and they are—so strange and unlike ours are the ways of God—I was likely enough to find them there.

I was welcomed by my intended host, a little pert, snub-nosed shoemaker, who greeted me as his cousin from London—a relationship which it seemed prudent to accept.

He took me into his little cabin, and there, with the assistance of a shrewd, good-natured wife, shared with me the best he had; and after supper commenced, mysteriously and in trembling, as if the very walls might have ears, a rambling, bitter diatribe on the wrongs and sufferings of the labourers; which went on till late in the night, and which I shall spare my readers: for if they have either brains or hearts, they ought to know more than I can tell them, from the public prints, and, indeed, from their own eyes—although, as a wise man says, there is nothing more difficult than to make people see first the facts which lie under their own nose.

Upon one point, however, which was new to me, he was very fierce—the customs of landlords letting

the cottages with their farms, for the mere sake of saving themselves trouble; thus giving up all power of protecting the poor man, and delivering him over, bound hand and foot, even in the matter of his commonest home comforts, to farmers, too penurious, too ignorant, and often too poor, to keep the cottages in a state fit for the habitation of human beings. Thus the poor man's hovel, as well as his labour, became, he told me, a source of profit to the farmer, out of which he wrung the last drop of gain. The necessary repairs were always put off as long as possible—the labourers were robbed of their gardens—the slightest rebellion lost them not only work, but shelter from the elements; the slavery under which they groaned penetrated even to the fireside and to the bedroom.

"And who was the landlord of this parish?"

"Oh! he believed he was a very good sort of man, and uncommon kind to the people where he lived, but that was fifty miles away in another country; and he liked that estate better than this, and never came down here, except for the shooting."

Full of many thoughts, and tired out with my journey, I went up to bed, in the same loft with the cobbler and his wife, and fell asleep, and dreamt of Lillian.

. . . . .

About eight o'clock the next morning I started forth with my guide, the shoemaker, over as desolate a country as men can well conceive. Not a house was to be seen for miles, except the knot of hovels

Alton helps two little agricultural labourers.

which we had left, and here and there a great dreary lump of farm-buildings, with its yard of yellow stacks. Beneath our feet the earth was iron, and the sky iron above our heads. Dark curdled clouds, "which had built up everywhere an under-roof of doleful grey," swept on before the bitter northern wind, which whistled through the low leafless hedges and rotting wattles, and crisped the dark sodden leaves of the scattered hollies, almost the only trees in sight.

conditions.

We trudged on, over wide stubbles, with innumerable weeds; over wide fallows, in which the deserted ploughs stood frozen fast; then over clover and grass, burnt black with frost; then over a field of turnips, where we passed a large fold of hurdles, within which some hundred sheep stood, with their heads turned from the cutting blast. All was dreary, idle, silent; no sound or sign of human beings. One wondered where the people lived, who cultivated so vast a tract of civilised, over-peopled, nineteenth-century England. As we came up to the fold, two little boys hailed us from the inside—two little wretches with blue noses and white cheeks, scarecrows of rags and patches, their feet peeping through worsted shoes twice too big for them, who seemed to have shared between them a ragged pair of worsted gloves, and cowered among the sheep, under the shelter of a hurdle, crying and inarticulate with cold.

allet

Sc. XLVII.

"What's the matter, boys?"

"Turmits is froze, and us can't turn the handle of the cutter. Do ye gie us a turn, please?"

We scrambled over the hurdles, and gave the miserable little creatures the benefit of ten minutes' labour. They seemed too small for such exertion: their little hands were purple with chilblains, and they were so sorefooted they could scarcely limp. I was surprised to find them at least three years older than their size and looks denoted, and still more surprised, too, to find that their salary for all this bitter exposure to the elements—such as I believe I could not have endured two days running—was the vast sum of one shilling a week each, Sundays included. "They didn't never go to school, nor to church nether, except just now and then, sometimes —they had to mind the shep."

I went on, sickened with the contrast between the highly-bred, over-fed, fat, thick-woolled animals, with their troughs of turnips and malt-dust, and their racks of rich clover-hay, and their little pent-house of rock-salt, having nothing to do but eat and sleep, and eat again, and the little half-starved shivering animals who were their slaves. Man the master of the brutes? Bah! As society is now, the brutes are the masters —the horse, the sheep, the bullock, is the master, and the labourer is their slave. "Oh! but the brutes are eaten!" Well; the horses at least are not eaten—they live, like landlords, till they die. And those who are eaten, are certainly not eaten by their human servants. The sheep they fat, another kills, to parody Shelley; and, after all, is not the labourer, as well as the sheep, eaten by you, my dear Society?—devoured

body and soul, not the less really because you are longer about the meal, there being an old prejudice against cannibalism, and also against murder—except after the Riot Act has been read.

"What!" shriek the insulted respectabilities, "have we not paid him his wages weekly, and has he not lived upon them?" Yes; and have you not given your sheep and horses their daily wages, and have they not lived on them? You wanted to work them; and they could not work, you know, unless they were alive. But here lies your iniquity: you gave the labourer nothing but his daily food—not even his lodgings; the pigs were not stinted of their wash to pay for their sty-room, the man was; and his wages, thanks to your competitive system, were beaten down deliberately and conscientiously (for was it not according to political economy, and the laws thereof?) to the minimum on which he could or would work, without the hope or the possibility of saving a farthing. You know how to invest your capital profitably, dear Society, and to save money over and above your income of daily comforts; but what has he saved?—What is he profited by all those years of labour? He has kept body and soul together—perhaps he could have done that without you or your help. But his wages are used up every Saturday night. When he stops working, you have in your pocket the whole real profits of his nearly fifty years' labour, and he has nothing. And then you say that you have not eaten him! You know, in your heart of hearts, that you

have. Else, why in Heaven's name do you pay him poor's rates? If, as you say, he has been duly repaid in wages, what is the meaning of that half-a-crown a week?—you owe him nothing. Oh! but the man would starve—common humanity forbids? What now, Society? Give him alms, if you will, on the score of humanity; but do not tax people for his support, whether they choose or not—that were a mere tyranny and robbery. If the landlord's feelings will not allow him to see the labourer starve, let him give, in God's name; but let him not cripple and drain, by compulsory poor-rates, the farmer who has paid him his "just remuneration" of wages, and the parson who probably, out of his scanty income, gives away twice as much in alms as the landlord does out of his superfluous one. (No, no; as long as you retain compulsory poor-laws, you confess that it is not merely humane, but just, to pay the labourer more than his wages. You confess yourself in debt to him, over and above an uncertain sum, which it suits you not to define, because such an investigation would expose ugly gaps and patches in that same snug competitive and property world of yours;) and, therefore, being the stronger party, you compel your debtor to give up the claim which you confess, for an annuity of half-a-crown a week—that being the just-above-starving-point of the economic thermometer. And yet you say you have not eaten the labourer! You see, we workmen too have our thoughts about political economy, differing slightly from yours, truly—just as the man who is

being hanged may take a somewhat different view of the process from the man who is hanging him. Which view is likely to be the more practical one?

With some such thoughts I walked across the open down, toward a circular camp, the earthwork, probably, of some old British town. Inside it, some thousand or so of labouring people were swarming restlessly round a single large block of stone, some relic of Druid times, on which a tall man stood, his dark figure thrown out in bold relief against the dreary sky. As we pushed through the crowd, I was struck with the wan, haggard look of all faces; their lacklustre eyes and drooping lips, stooping shoulders, heavy, dragging steps, gave them a crushed, dogged air, which was infinitely painful, and bespoke a grade of misery more habitual and degrading than that of the excitable and passionate artisan.

There were many women among them, talking shrilly, and looking even more pinched and wan than the men.

I remarked, also, that many of the crowd carried heavy sticks, pitchforks, and other tools which might be used as fearful weapons—an ugly sign, which I ought to have heeded betimes.

They glared with sullen curiosity at me and my Londoner's clothes, as, with no small feeling of self-importance, I pushed my way to the foot of the stone. The man who stood on it seemed to have been speaking some time. His words, like all I heard that day, were utterly devoid of anything like eloquence or

imagination—a dull string of somewhat incoherent complaints, which derived their force only from the intense earnestness, which attested their truthfulness. As far as I can recollect, I will give the substance of what I heard. But, indeed, I heard nothing but what has been bandied about from newspaper to newspaper for years—confessed by all parties, deplored by all parties, but never an attempt made to remedy it.

Ag. lab.

"The farmers makes slaves on us. I can't hear no difference between a Christian and a nigger, except they flogs the niggers and starves the Christians; and I don't know which I'd choose. I served Farmer * * * * seven year, off and on, and arter harvest he tells me he's no more work for me, nor my boy nether, acause he's getting too big for him, so he gets a little 'un instead, and we does nothing; and my boy lies about, getting into bad ways, like hundreds more; and then we goes to board, and they bids us go and look for work; and we goes up next part to London. I couldn't get none; they'd enough to do, they said, to employ their own; and we begs our way home, and goes into the Union; and they turns us out again in two or three days, and promises us work again, and gives us two days' gravel-picking, and then says they has no more for us; and we was sore pinched, and laid a-bed all day; then next board-day we goes to 'em and they gives us one day more—and that threw us off another week, and then next board-day we goes into the Union again for three days, and gets sent out again; and so I've been starving one-half of the time,

and they putting us off and on o' purpose like that; and I'll bear it no longer, and that's what I says."

He came down, and a tall, powerful, well-fed man, evidently in his Sunday smock-frock and clean yellow leggings, got up and began:

"I hav'n't no complaint to make about myself. I've a good master, and the parson's a right kind 'un, and that's more than all can say, and the squire's a real gentleman; and my master, he don't need to lower his wages. I gets my ten shillings a week all the year round, and harvesting, and a pig, and a 'lotment—and that's just why I come here. If I can get it, why can't you?"

"Cause our masters baint like yourn."

"No, by George, there baint no money round here like that, I can tell you."

"And why ain't they?" continued the speaker. "There's the shame on it. There's my master can grow five quarters where yourn only grows three; and so he can live and pay like a man; and so he say he don't care for free trade. [You know, as well as I, that there's not half o' the land round here grows what it ought. They ain't no money to make it grow more, and besides, they won't employ no hands to keep it clean. I come across more weeds in one field here, than I've seen for nine year on our farm. Why arn't some of you a-getting they weeds up? It 'ud pay 'em to farm better—and they knows that, but they're too lazy; if they can just get a living off the land, they don't care; and they'd sooner save money out of your

wages, than save it by growing more corn—it's easier for 'em, it is. There's the work to be done, and they won't let you do it. There's you crying out for work, and work crying out for you—and neither of you can get to the other. I say that's a shame, I do. I say a poor man's a slave. He daren't leave his parish—nobody won't employ him, as can employ his own folk. And if he stays in his parish, it's just a chance whether he gets a good master or a bad 'un. He can't choose, and that's a shame, it is. Why should he go starving because his master don't care to do the best by the land? If they can't till the land, I say let them get out of it, and let them work it as can. And I think as we ought all to sign a petition to Government, to tell 'em all about it; though I don't see as how they could help us, unless they'd make a law to force the squires to put in nobody to a farm as hasn't money to work it fairly."

"I says," said the next speaker, a poor fellow whose sentences were continually broken by a hacking cough, "just what he said. If they can't till the land, let them do it as can. But they won't; they won't let us have a scrap on it, though we'd pay 'em more for it nor ever they'd make for themselves. But they says it 'ud make us too independent, if we had an acre or so o' land; and so it 'ud for they. And so I says as he did—they want to make slaves on us altogether, just to get the flesh and bones off us at their own price. Look you at this here down.—If I had an acre on it, to make a garden on, I'd live well with my

wages, off and on. Why, if this here was in garden, it 'ud be worth twenty, forty times o' that it be now. And last spring I lays out o' work from Christmas till barley-sowing, and I goes to the farmer and axes for a bit o' land to dig and plant a few potatoes—and he says, 'You be d—d! If you're minding your garden after hours, you'll not be fit to do a proper day's work for me in hours—and I shall want you by-and-by, when the weather breaks'—for it was frost most bitter, it was. 'And if you gets potatoes you'll be getting a pig—and then you'll want straw, and meal to fat 'un—and then I'll not trust you in my barn, I can tell ye;' and so there it was. And if I'd had only one half-acre of this here very down as we stands on, as isn't worth five shillings a year—and I'd a given ten shillings for it—my belly wouldn't a been empty now. [Oh, they be dogs in the manger, and the Lord 'll reward 'em therefor! First they says they can't afford to work the land 'emselves, and then they wain't let us work it ether. Then they says prices is so low they can't keep us on, and so they lowers our wages; and then when prices goes up ever so much, our wages don't go up with 'em.] So, high prices or low prices, it's all the same. With the one we can't buy bread, and with the other we can't get work. I don't mind free trade—not I: to be sure, if the loaf's cheap, we shall be ruined; but if the loaf's dear, we shall be starved, and for that, we is starved now. [Nobody don't care for us;] for my part, I don't much care for myself. A man must die some time or

other. Only I thinks if we could some time or other just see the Queen once, and tell her all about it, she'd take our part, and not see us put upon like that, I do."

"Gentlemen!" cried my guide, the shoemaker, in a somewhat conceited and dictatorial tone, as he skipped up by the speaker's side, and gently shouldered him down—"it ain't like the ancient times, as I've read of, when any poor man as had a petition could come promiscuously to the King's royal presence, and put it direct into his own hand, and be treated like a gentleman. Don't you know as how they locks up the Queen now-a-days, and never lets a poor soul come a-near her, lest she should hear the truth of all their iniquities? Why they never lets her stir without a lot o' dragoons with drawn swords riding all around her; and if you dared to go up to her to ax mercy, whoot! they'd chop your head off before you could say, 'Please your Majesty.' And then the hypocrites say as it's to keep her from being frightened—and that's true—for it's frightened she'd be, with a vengeance, if she knowed all that they grand folks make poor labourers suffer, to keep themselves in power and great glory. I tell ye, 'tarn't per-practicable at all, to ax the Queen for anything; she's afeard of her life on 'em. You just take my advice, and sign a round-robin to the squires—you tell 'em as you're willing to till the land for 'em, if they'll let you. There's draining and digging enough to be done as 'ud keep ye all in work, arn't there?"

"Ay, ay; there's lots o' work to be done, if so be we could get at it. Everybody knows that."

"Well, you tell 'em that. Tell 'em here's hundreds, and hundreds of ye starving, and willing to work; and then tell 'em, if they won't find ye work, they shall find ye meat. There's lots o' victuals in their larders now; haven't you as good a right to it as their jackanapes o' footmen? The squires is at the bottom of it all. What do you stupid fellows go grumbling at the farmers for? Don't they squires tax the land twenty or thirty shillings an acre; and what do they do for that? The best of 'em, if he gets five thousand a year out o' the land, don't give back five hundred in charity, or schools, or poor-rates—and what's that to speak of? And the main of 'em—curse 'em!—they drains the money out o' the land, and takes it up to London, or into foreign parts, to spend on fine clothes and fine dinners; or throws it away at elections, to make folks beastly drunk, and sell their souls for money—and we gets no good on it. I'll tell you what it's come to, my men—that we can't afford no more landlords. We can't afford 'em, and that's the truth of it!"

The crowd growled a dubious assent.

"Oh, yes, you can grumble at the farmers, acause you deals with them first-hand; but you be too stupid to do aught but hunt by sight. I be an old dog, and I hunts cunning. I sees farther than my nose, I does. I larnt politics to London when I was a prentice; and I ain't forgotten the plans of it. Look you here. The farmers, they say they can't live unless they can

make four rents, one for labour, and one for stock, and one for rent, and one for themselves; ain't that about right? Very well; just now they can't make four rents—in course they can't. Now, who's to suffer for that?—the farmer as works, or the labourer as works, or the landlord as does nothing? But he takes care on himself. He won't give up his rent—not he. Perhaps he might give back ten per cent, and what's that?—two shillings an acre, maybe. What's that, if corn falls two pound a load, and more? Then the farmer gets a stinting; and he can't stint hisself, he's bad enough off already; he's forty shillings out o' pocket on every load of wheat—that's eight shillings, maybe, on every acre of his land on a four-course shift—and where's the eight shillings to come from, for the landlord's only given him back two on it? He can't stint hisself, he daren't stint his stock, and so he stints the labourers; and so it's you as pays the landlord's rent—you, my boys, out o' your flesh and bones, you do—and you can't afford it any longer, by the look of you—so just tell 'em so!"

[This advice seemed to me as sadly unpractical as the rest. In short, there seemed to be no hope, no purpose among them—and they felt it; and I could hear from the running comment of murmurs, that they were getting every moment more fierce, and desperate at the contemplation of their own helplessness] —a mood which the next speech was not likely to soften.

A pale, thin woman scrambled up on the stone, and

stood there, her scanty and patched garments fluttering in the bitter breeze, as, with face sharpened with want, and eyes fierce with misery, she began, in a querulous, scornful falsetto:

"I am an honest woman. I brought up seven children decently; and never axed the parish for a farden, till my husband died. Then they tells me I can support myself and mine—and so I does. Early and late I hoed turmits, and early and late I rep, and left the children at home to mind each other; and one on 'em fell into the fire, and is gone to heaven, blessed angel! and two more it pleased the Lord to take in the fever; and the next, I hope, will soon be out o' this miserable sinful world. But look you here: three weeks agone, I goes to the board. I had no work. They say they could not relieve me for the first week, because I had money yet to take.—The hypocrites! they knowing as I couldn't but owe it all, and a lot more beside. Next week they sends the officer to inquire. That was ten days gone, and we starving. Then, on board-day, they gives me two loaves. Then, next week, they takes it off again. And when I goes over (five miles) to the board to ax why—they'd find me work—and they never did; so we goes on starving for another week—for no one wouldn't trust us; how could they when we was in debt already a whole lot?—you're all in debt!"

"That we are."

"There's some here as never made ten shillings a week in their lives, as owes twenty pounds at the shop!"

"Ay, and more—and how's a man ever to pay that?"

"So this week, when I comes, they offers me the house. Would I go into the house? They'd be glad to have me, acause I'm strong and hearty and a good nurse. But would I, that am an honest woman, go to live with they offscourings—they——" (she used a strong word)—"would I be parted from my children? Would I let them hear the talk, and keep the company as they will there, and learn all sorts o' sins that they never heard on, blessed be God! [I'll starve first, and see them starve too—though, Lord knows, it's hard.—Oh! it's hard," she said, bursting into tears, "to leave them as I did this morning, crying after their breakfasts, and I none to give 'em.] I've got no bread—where should I? I've got no fire—how can I give one shilling and sixpence a hundred for coals? And if I did, who'd fetch 'em home? And if I dared break a hedge for a knitch o' wood, they'd put me in prison, they would, with the worst. What be I to do? What be you going to do? That's what I came here for. What be ye going to do for us women—us that starve and stint, and wear our hands off for you men and your children, and get hard words, and hards blows from you? Oh! if I was a man, I know what I'd do, I do! But I don't think you be men three parts o' you, or you'd not see the widow and the orphan starve as you do, and sit quiet and grumble, as long as you can keep your own bodies and souls together. Eh! ye cowards!"

What more she would have said in her excitement, which had risen to an absolute scream, I cannot tell; but some prudent friend pulled her down off the stone, to be succeeded by a speaker more painful, if possible; an aged blind man, the worn-out melancholy of whose slow, feeble voice made my heart sink, and hushed the murmuring crowd into silent awe.

Slowly he turned his grey, sightless head from side to side, as if feeling for the faces below him—and then began:

"I heard you was all to be here—and I suppose you are; and I said I would come—though I suppose they'll take off my pay, if they hear of it. But I knows the reason of it, and the bad times and all. The Lord revealed it to me as clear as day, four years agone come Easter-tide. It's all along of our sins, and our wickedness—because we forgot Him—it is. I mind the old war times, what times they was, when there was smuggled brandy up and down in every public, and work more than hands could do. And then, how we all forgot the Lord, and went after our own lusts and pleasures—squires and parsons, and farmers and labouring folk, all alike. They oughted to ha' knowed better—and we oughted too. Many's the Sunday I spent in skittle-playing and cock-fighting, and the pound I spent in beer, as might ha' been keeping me now. We was an evil and perverse generation—and so one o' my sons went for a sodger, and was shot at Waterloo, and the other fell into evil ways, and got sent across seas—and I be left alone for my sins. But

the Lord was very gracious to me and showed me how it was all a judgment on my sins, He did. He has turned his face from us, and that's why we're troubled. And so I don't see no use in this meeting. It won't do no good; nothing won't do us no good, unless we all repent of our wicked ways, our drinking, and our dirt, and our love-children, and our picking and stealing, and gets the Lord to turn our hearts, and to come back again, and have mercy on us, and take us away speedily out of this wretched world, where there's nothing but misery and sorrow, into His everlasting glory, Amen! Folks say as the day of judgment's a coming soon—and I partly think so myself. I wish it was all over, and we in heaven above; and that's all I have to say."

It seemed a not unnatural revulsion, when a tall, fierce man, with a forbidding squint, sprung jauntily on the stone, and setting his arms a-kimbo, broke out:

"Here be I, Blinkey, and I has as good a right to speak as ere a one. You're all blarned fools, you are. So's that old blind buffer there. You sticks like pigs in a gate, hollering and squeeking, and never helping yourselves. Why can't you do like me? I never does no work—darned if I'll work to please the farmers. The rich folks robs me, and I robs them, and that's fair and equal. You only turn poachers—you only go stealing turmits, and fire-ud, and all as you can find—and then you'll not need to work. Arn't it yourn? The game's no one's, is it now?—you know

that. And if you takes turmits or corn, they're yourn —you helped to grow 'em. And if you're put to prison, I tell ye, it's a darned deal warmer, and better victuals too, than ever a one of you gets at home, let alone the Union. Now I knows the dodge. Whenever my wife's ready for her trouble, I gets cotched; then I lives like a prince in gaol, and she goes to the workus; and when it's all over, start fair again. Oh, you blockheads!—to stand here shivering with empty bellies. —You just go down to the farm and burn they stacks over the old rascal's head; and then they that let you starve now, will be forced to keep you then. If you can't get your share of the poor-rates, try the county-rates, my bucks—you can get fat on them at the Queen's expense—and that's more than you'll do in ever a Union as I hear on. Who'll come down and pull the farm about the folks' ears? Warn't he as turned five on yer off last week? and ain't he more corn there than 'ud feed you all round this day, and won't sell it, just because he's waiting till folks are starved enough, and prices rise? Curse the old villain! —who'll help to disappoint him 'o that? Come along!"

A confused murmur arose, and a movement in the crowd. I felt that now or never was the time to speak. If once the spirit of mad aimless riot broke loose, I had not only no chance of a hearing, but every likelihood of being implicated in deeds which I abhorred; and I sprung on the stone and entreated a few minutes' attention, telling them that I was a

deputation from one of the London Chartists committees. This seemed to turn the stream of their thoughts, and they gaped in stupid wonder at me as I began hardly less excited than themselves.

I assured them of the sympathy of the London working men, made a comment on their own speeches —which the reader ought to be able to make for himself—and told them that I had come to entreat their assistance towards obtaining such a parliamentary representation as would secure them their rights. I explained the idea of the Charter, and begged for their help in carrying it out.

To all which they answered surlily, that they did not know anything about politics—that what they wanted was bread.

I went on, more vehement than ever, to show them how all their misery sprung (as I then fancied) from being unrepresented—how the laws were made by the rich for the poor, and not by all for all—how the taxes bit deep into the necessaries of the labourer, and only nibbled at the luxuries of the rich—how the criminal-code exclusively attacked the crimes to which the poor were prone, while it dared not interfere with the subtler iniquities of the high-born and wealthy—how poor-rates, as I have just said, were a confession on the part of society that the labourer was not fully remunerated. I tried to make them see that their interest, as much as common justice, demanded that they should have a voice in the councils of the nation, such as would truly proclaim their wants, their rights,

their wrongs; and I have seen no reason since then to unsay my words.

To all which they answered, that their stomachs were empty, and they wanted bread. "And bread we will have!"

"Go, then," I cried, losing my self-possession between disappointment and the maddening desire of influence—and, indeed, who could hear their story, or even look upon their faces, and not feel some indignation stir in him, unless self-interest had drugged his heart and conscience—"go," I cried, "and get bread! After all, you have a right to it. No man is bound to starve. There are rights above all laws, and the right to live is one. Laws were made for man, not man for laws. If you had made the laws yourselves, they might bind you even in this extremity; but they were made in spite of you—against you. They rob you, crush you; even now they deny you bread. God has made the earth free to all, like the air and sunshine, and you are shut out from off it. The earth is yours, for you till it. Without you it would be a desert. Go and demand your share of that corn, the fruit of your own industry. What matter, if your tyrants imprison, murder you?—they can but kill your bodies at once, instead of killing them piecemeal, as they do now; and your blood will cry against them from the ground!!—Ay, Woe!"—I went on, carried away by feelings for which I shall make no apology; for, however confused, there was, and is, and ever will be, a God's truth in them, as this generation will find

out at the moment when its own serene self-satisfaction crumbles underneath it—["Woe unto those that grind the faces of the poor! Woe unto those who add house to house, and field to field, till they stand alone in the land, and there is no room left for the poor man! The wages of their reapers, which they have held back by fraud, cry out against them; and their cry has entered into the ears of the God of heaven——"]

But I had no time to finish. The murmur swelled into a roar for "Bread! Bread!" My hearers had taken me at my word. I had raised the spirit; could I command him, now he was abroad?

"Go to Jennings's farm!"

"No! he ain't no corn, he sold un' all last week."

"There's plenty at the Hall farm! Rouse out the old steward!"

And, amid yells and execrations, the whole mass poured down the hill, sweeping me away with them. I was shocked and terrified at their threats. I tried again and again to stop and harangue them. I shouted myself hoarse about the duty of honesty; warned them against pillage and violence; entreated them to take nothing but the corn which they actually needed; but my voice was drowned in the uproar. Still I felt myself in a measure responsible for their conduct; I had helped to excite them, and dare not, in honour desert them; and trembling, I went on, prepared to see the worst; following, as a flag of distress, a mouldy crust, brandished on the point of a pitchfork.

Bursting through the rotting and half-fallen palings, we entered a wide, rushy, neglected park, and along an old gravel road, now green with grass, we opened on a sheet of frozen water, and, on the opposite bank, the huge square corpse of a hall, the close-shuttered windows of which gave it a dead and ghastly look, except where here and there a single one showed, as through a black empty eye-socket, the dark unfurnished rooms within. On the right, beneath us, lay, amid tall elms, a large mass of farm-buildings, into the yard of which the whole mob rushed tumultuously —just in time to see an old man on horseback dart out and gallop hatless up the park, amid the yells of the mob.

"The old rascal's gone! and he'll call up the yeomanry. We must be quick, boys!" shouted one, and the first signs of plunder showed themselves in an indiscriminate chase after various screaming geese and turkeys; while a few of the more steady went up to the house-door, and knocking, demanded sternly the granary keys.

A fat virago planted herself in the doorway, and commenced railing at them, with the cowardly courage which the fancied immunity of their sex gives to coarse women; but she was hastily shoved aside, and took shelter in an upper room, where she stood screaming and cursing at the window.

The invaders returned, cramming their mouths with bread, and chopping asunder flitches of bacon. The granary doors were broken open, and the con-

tents scrambled for, amid immense waste, by the starving wretches. It was a sad sight. Here was a poor shivering woman, hiding scraps of food under her cloak, and hurrying out of the yard to the children she had left at home. There was a tall man, leaning against the palings, gnawing ravenously at the same loaf as a little boy, who had scrambled up behind him. Then a huge blackguard came whistling up to me, with a can of ale. "Drink, my beauty! you're dry with hollering by now!"

"The ale is neither yours nor mine; I won't touch it."

"Darn your buttons! You said the wheat was ourn, acause we growed it—and thereby so's the beer—for we growed the barley too."

And so thought the rest; for the yard was getting full of drunkards, a woman or two among them, reeling knee-deep in the loose straw among the pigs.

"Thresh out they ricks!" roared another.

"Get out the threshing-machine!"

"You harness the horses!"

"No! there bain't no time. Yeomanry 'll be here. You mun leave the ricks."

"Darned if we do. Old Woods shan't get naught by they."

"Fire 'em, then, and go on to Slater's farm!"

"As well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb," hiccuped Blinkey, as he rushed through the yard with a lighted brand. I tried to stop him, but fell on my face in the deep straw, and got round the barns to the

rick-yard just in time to hear a crackle—there was no mistaking it; the windward stack was in a blaze of fire.

I stood awe-struck—I cannot tell how long—watching how the live flame-snakes crept and hissed, and leapt and roared, and rushed in long horizontal jets from stack to stack before the howling wind, and fastened their fiery talons on the barn-eaves, and swept over the peaked roofs, and hurled themselves in fiery flakes into the yard beyond—the food of man, the labour of years, devoured in aimless ruin!—Was it my doing? Was it not?

At last I recollected myself, and ran round again into the straw-yard, where the fire was now falling fast. The only thing which saved the house was the weltering mass of bullocks, pigs, and human beings drunk and sober, which trampled out unwittingly the flames as fast as they caught.

The fire had seized the roofs of the cart-stables, when a great lubberly boy blubbered out:—

"Git my horses out! git my horses out o' the fire! I be so fond o' mun!"

"Well, they ain't done no harm, poor beasts!" And a dozen men ran in to save them; but the poor wretches, screaming with terror, refused to stir. I never knew what became of them—but their shrieks still haunt my dreams. . . .

The yard now became a pandemonium. The more ruffianly part of the mob—and alas! there were but too many of them—hurled the furniture out of the windows, or ran off with anything that they could

carry. In vain I expostulated, threatened; I was answered by laughter, curses, frantic dances, and brandished plunder. [Then I first found out how large a portion of rascality shelters itself under the wing of every crowd; and at the moment I almost excused the rich for overlooking the real sufferers, in indignation at the rascals. But even the really starving majority, whose faces proclaimed the grim fact of their misery, seemed gone mad for the moment. The old crust of sullen dogged patience had broken up, and their whole souls had exploded into reckless fury and brutal revenge]—and yet there was no hint of violence against the red fat woman, who, surrounded with her blubbering children, stood screaming and cursing at the first-floor window, getting redder and fatter at every scream. The worst personality she heard was a roar of laughter, in which, such is poor humanity, I could not but join, as her little starved drab of a maid-of-all-work ran out of the door, with a bundle of stolen finery under her arm, and high above the roaring of the flames, and the shouts of the rioters, rose her mistress's yell.

"O Betsy! Betsy! you little awdacious unremorseful hussy!—a running away with my best bonnet and shawl!"

The laughter soon, however, subsided, when a man rushed breathlessly into the yard, shouting, "The yeomanry!"

At that sound, to my astonishment, a general panic ensued. The miserable wretches never stopped to

inquire how many, or how far off, they were—but scrambled to every outlet of the yard, trampling each other down in their hurry. I leaped up on the wall, and saw, galloping down the park, a mighty armament of some fifteen men, with a tall officer at their head, mounted on a splendid horse.

"There they be! there they be! all the varmers, and young Squire Clayton wi' mun, on his grey hunter! O Lord! O Lord! and all their swords drawn!"

I thought of the old story in Herodotus—how the Scythian masters returned from war to the rebel slaves who had taken possession of their lands and wives, and brought them down on their knees with terror, at the mere sight of the old dreaded dog-whips.

I did not care to run. I was utterly disgusted, disappointed with myself—the people. I longed, for the moment, to die and leave it all; and left almost alone, sat down on a stone, buried my head between my hands, and tried vainly to shut out from my ears the roaring of the fire.

At that moment "Blinkey" staggered out past me and against me, a writing-desk in his hands, shouting, in his drunken glory, "I've vound ut at last! I've got the old fellow's money! Hush! What a vule I be, hollering like that!"—And he was going to sneak off, with a face of drunken cunning, when I sprung up and seized him by the throat.

"Rascal! robber! lay that down! Have you not done mischief enough already!"

"I wain't have no sharing. What? Do you want un yourself, eh? Then we'll see who's the stronger!"

And in an instant he shook me from him, and dealt me a blow with the corner of the desk, that laid me on the ground. . . .

I just recollect the tramp of the yeomanry horses, and the gleam and jingle of their arms, as they galloped into the yard. I caught a glimpse of the tall young officer, as his great grey horse swept through the air, over the high yard-pales—a feat to me utterly astonishing. Half a dozen long strides—the wretched ruffian, staggering across the field with his booty, was caught up.—The clear blade gleamed in the air—and then a fearful yell—and after that I recollect nothing.

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Slowly I recovered my consciousness. I was lying on a truckle-bed—stone walls and a grated window! A man stood over me with a large bunch of keys in his hand. He had been wrapping my head with wet towels. I knew, instinctively, where I was.

"Well, young man," said he, in a not unkindly tone—"and a nice job you've made of it! Do you know where you are?"

"Yes," answered I, quietly; "in D * * * * gaol."

"Exactly so!"

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRIAL.

THE day was come—quickly, thank Heaven; and I stood at the bar, with four or five miserable, haggard labourers, to take my trial for sedition, riot, and arson.

I had passed the intervening weeks half stupefied with the despair of utter disappointment; disappointment at myself and my own loss of self-possession, which had caused all my misfortune,—perhaps, too, and the thought was dreadful, that of my wretched fellow-sufferers—disappointment with the labourers, with The Cause; and when the thought came over me, in addition, that I was irreparably disgraced in the eyes of my late patrons, parted for ever from Lillian by my own folly, I laid down my head and longed to die.

Then, again, I would recover awhile, and pluck up heart. I would plead my cause myself—I would testify against the tyrants to their face—I would say no longer to their besotted slaves, but to the men themselves, ("Go to, ye rich men, weep and howl! The hire of your labourers who have reaped down

your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped hath entered into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts.") I would brave my fate—I would die protesting, and glory in my martyrdom. But——

"Martyrdom?" said Mackaye, who had come down to D * * * *, and was busy night and day about my trial. "Ye'll just leave alone the martyr dodge, my puir bairn. Ye're na martyr at a', ye'll understand, but a verra foolish callant, that lost his temper, an' cast his pearls before swine—an' very questionable pearls they, too, to judge by the price they fetch i' the market."

And then my heart sank again. And a few days before the trial a letter came, evidently in my cousin's handwriting, though only signed with his initials:

"SIR,—You are in a very great scrape—you will not deny that. How you will get out of it depends on your own common sense. You probably won't be hanged—for nobody believes that you had a hand in burning the farm; but, unless you take care, you will be transported. Call yourself John Nokes; entrust your case to a clever lawyer, and keep in the background. I warn you, as a friend—if you try to speechify, and play the martyr, and let out who you are, the respectable people who have been patronising you will find it necessary for their own sakes to clap a stopper on you for good and all, to make you out an impostor and a swindler, and get you out of the

way for life: while, if you are quiet, it will suit them to be quiet too, and say nothing about you, if you say nothing about them; and then there will be a chance that they, as well as your own family, will do everything in their power to hush the matter up. So, again, don't let out your real name; and instruct your lawyers to know nothing about the W.'s; and then, perhaps, the Queen's counsel will know nothing about them either. Mind—you are warned, and woe to you if you are fool enough not to take the warning.

"G. L."

Plead in a false name! Never, so help me Heaven! To go into court with a lie in my mouth—to make myself an impostor—probably a detected one—it seemed the most cunning scheme for ruining me, which my evil genius could have suggested, whether or not it might serve his own selfish ends. But as for the other hints, they seemed not unreasonable, and promised to save me trouble; while the continued pressure of anxiety and responsibility was getting intolerable to my over-wearied brain. So I showed the letter to Mackaye, who then told me that he had taken it for granted that I should come to my right mind, and had therefore already engaged an old compatriot as attorney, and the best counsel which money could procure.

"But where did you get the money? You have not surely been spending your own savings on me?"

"I canna say that I wadna ha' so dune, in case o'

need. But the men in town just subscribit; puir honest fellows."

"What! is my folly to be the cause of robbing them of their slender earnings? Never, Mackaye! Besides, they cannot have subscribed enough to pay the barrister whom you just mentioned. Tell me the whole truth, or, positively, I will plead my cause myself."

"Aweel, then, there was a bit bank-note or twa cam' to hand—I canna say whaur fra'. But they that sent it direckit it to be expendit in the defence o' the sax prisoners—whereof ye mak' ane."

Again a world of fruitless conjecture. It must be the same unknown friend who had paid my debt to my cousin—Lillian?

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And so the day was come. I am not going to make a long picturesque description of my trial—trials have become lately quite hackneyed subjects, stock properties for the fiction-mongers—neither, indeed, could I do so, if I would. I recollect nothing of that day, but fragments—flashes of waking existence, scattered up and down in what seemed to me a whole life of heavy, confused, painful dreams, with the glare of all those faces concentrated on me—those countless eyes which I could not, could not meet—stony, careless, unsympathising—not even angry—only curious. If they had but frowned on me, insulted me, gnashed their teeth on me, I could have glared back defiance; as it was, I stood cowed and stupefied, a craven by the side of cravens.

Let me see—what can I recollect? Those faces—faces—everywhere faces—a faint, sickly smell of flowers—a perpetual whispering and rustling of dresses—and all through it, the voice of some one talking, talking—I seldom knew what, or whether it was counsel, witness, judge, or prisoner, that was speaking. I was like one asleep at a foolish lecture, who hears in dreams, and only wakes when the prosing stops. Was it not prosing? What was it to me what they said? [They could not understand me—my motives—my excuses; the whole pleading, on my side as well as the crown's, seemed one huge fallacy—beside the matter altogether—never touching the real point at issue, the eternal moral equity of my deeds or misdeeds. I had no doubt that it would all be conducted quite properly, and fairly, and according to the forms of law; but what was law to me—I wanted justice.] And so I let them go on their own way, conscious of but one thought—was Lillian in the court?

I dared not look and see. I dared not lift up my eyes toward the gaudy rows of ladies who had crowded to the "interesting trial of the D * * * * rioters." The torture of anxiety was less than that of certainty might be, and I kept my eyes down, and wondered how on earth the attorneys had found in so simple a case enough to stuff those great blue bags.

When, however, anything did seem likely to touch on a reality, I woke up forthwith, in spite of myself. I recollect well, for instance, a squabble about chal-

lenging the jurymen; and my counsel's voice of pious indignation, as he asked, "Do you call these agricultural gentlemen, and farmers, however excellent and respectable—on which point Heaven forbid that I, etc. etc.—the prisoner's 'pares,' peers, equals, or likes? What single interest, opinion, or motive, have they in common, but the universal one of self-interest, which, in this case happens to pull in exactly opposite directions? Your Lordship has often animadverted fully and boldly on the practice of allowing a bench of squires to sit in judgment on a poacher; surely it is quite as unjust that agricultural rioters should be tried by a jury of the very class against whom they are accused of rebelling."

Ag. lab.

"Perhaps my learned brother would like a jury of rioters?" suggested some Queen's counsel.

"Upon my word, then, it would be much the fairer plan."

I wondered whether he would have dared to say as much in the street outside—and relapsed into indifference. I believe there was some long delay, and wrangling about law-quibbles, which seemed likely at one time to quash the whole prosecution, but I was rather glad than sorry to find that it had been overruled. It was all a play, a game of bowls—the bowls happening to be human heads—got up between the lawyers, for the edification of society; and it would have been a pity not to play it out, according to the rules and regulations thereof.

As for the evidence, its tenor may be easily sup-

posed from my story. There were those who could swear to my language at the camp. I was seen accompanying the mob to the farm, and haranguing them. The noise was too great for the witnesses to hear all I said, but they were certain I talked about the sacred name of liberty. The farmer's wife had seen me run round to the stacks when they were fired —whether just before or just after, she never mentioned. She had seen me running up and down in front of the house, talking loudly, and gesticulating violently; she saw me, too, struggling with another rioter for her husband's desk;—and the rest of the witnesses, some of whom I am certain I had seen busy plundering, though they were ready to swear that they had been merely accidental passers-by, seemed to think that they proved their own innocence, and testified their pious indignation, by avoiding carefully any fact which could excuse me. [But, somehow, my counsel thought differently; and cross-examined, and bullied, and tormented, and misstated—as he was bound to do; and so one witness after another, clumsy and cowardly enough already, was driven by his engines of torture, as if by a pitiless spell, to deny half that he had deposed truly, and confess a great deal that was utterly false—till confusion became worse confounded, and there seemed no truth anywhere, and no falsehood either, and "naught was everything, and everything was naught;" till I began to have doubts whether the riot had ever occurred at all—and, indeed, doubts of my own identity also,

when I had heard the counsel for the crown impute to me personally, as in duty bound, every seditious atrocity which had been committed either in England or France since 1793. To him, certainly, I did listen tolerably; it was "as good as a play." Atheism, blasphemy, vitriol-throwing, and community of women, were among my lighter offences—for had I not actually been engaged in a plot for the destruction of property? How did the court know that I had not spent the night before the riot, as "the doctor" and his friends did before the riots of 1839, in drawing lots for the estates of the surrounding gentlemen, with my deluded dupes and victims?—for of course I, and not want of work, had deluded them into rioting; at least, they never would have known that they were starving, if I had not stirred up their evil passions by daring to inform them of that otherwise impalpable fact. I, the only Chartist there? Might there not have been dozens of them?—emissaries from London, dressed up as starving labourers, and rheumatic old women? There were actually traces of a plan for seizing all the ladies in the country, and setting up a seraglio of them in D * * * * Cathedral. How did the court know that there was not one?

Ay, how indeed? and how did I know either? I really began to question whether the man might not be right after all. The whole theory seemed so horribly coherent—possible, natural. I might have done it, under possession of the devil, and forgotten it in excitement—I might—perhaps I did. And if

there, why not elsewhere? Perhaps I had helped Jourdan Coupe-tête at Lyons, and been king of the Munster Anabaptists—why not? What matter? When would this eternity of wigs, and bonnets, and glaring windows, and ear-grinding prate and jargon, as of a diabolic universe of street organs, end—end—end—and I get quietly hanged, and done with it all for ever?

Oh, the horrible length of that day! It seemed to me as if I had been always on my trial, ever since I was born. I wondered at times how many years ago it had all begun. I felt what a far stronger and more single-hearted patriot than I, poor Somerville, says of himself under the torture of the sergeant's cat, in a passage, whose horrible simplicity and unconscious pathos have haunted me ever since I read it; how, when only fifty out of his hundred lashes had fallen on the bleeding back; "*The time since they began was like a long period of life: I felt as if I had lived all the time of my real life in torture, and that the days when existence had a pleasure in it were a dream long, long gone by.*"

The reader may begin to suspect that I was fast going mad; and I believe I was. If he has followed my story with a human heart, he may excuse me of any extreme weakness, if I did at moments totter on the verge of that abyss.

What saved me, I believe now, was the keen, bright look of love and confidence which flashed on me from Crossthwaite's glittering eyes, when he was called

forward as a witness to my character. He spoke out like a man, I hear, that day. But the counsel for the crown tried to silence him triumphantly, by calling on him to confess himself a Chartist; as if a man must needs be a liar and a villain because he holds certain opinions about the franchise! However that was, I heard, the general opinion of the court. And then Crossthwaite lost his temper and called the Queen's counsel a hired bully, and so went down; having done, as I was told afterwards, no good to me.

And then there followed a passage of tongue fence between Mackaye and some barrister, and great laughter at the barrister's expense; and then I heard the old man's voice rise thin and clear:

"Let him that is without sin amang ye, cast the first stane!"

And as he went down he looked at me—a look full of despair. I never had had a ray of hope from the beginning; but now I began to think whether men suffered much when they were hung, and whether one woke at once into the next life, or had to wait till the body had returned to the dust, and watch the ugly process of one's own decay. I was not afraid of death —I never experienced that sensation. I am not physically brave. I am as thoroughly afraid of pain as any child can be; but that next world has never offered any prospect to me, save boundless food for my insatiable curiosity.

. . . . . .

But at that moment my attorney thrust into my

hand a little dirty scrap of paper. "Do you know this man?"

I read it.

"SIR,—I wull tell all truthe. Mr. Locke is a murdered man if he be hanged. Lev me spek out, for love of the Lord.

"J. DAVIS."

No. I never had heard of him; and I let the paper fall.

S. (law)

[A murdered man? I had known that all along. Had not the Queen's counsel been trying all day to murder me, as was their duty, seeing that they got their living thereby?]

A few moments after, a labouring man was in the witness-box; and to my astonishment, telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

I will not trouble the reader with his details, for they were simply and exactly what I have already stated. He was badgered, bullied, cross-examined, but nothing could shake him. With that dogged honesty, and laconic dignity, which is the good side of the English peasant's character, he stood manfully to his assertion—that I had done everything that words or actions could do to prevent violence, even to the danger of my own personal safety. He swore to the words which I used when trying to wrest the desk from the man who had stolen it; and when the Queen's counsel asked him, tauntingly, who had set him on bringing his new story there at the eleventh

hour, he answered, equally to the astonishment of his questioner, and of me.

"Muster Locke, hisself."

"What! the prisoner?" almost screamed the counsellor, who fancied, I suppose, that he had stumbled on a confession of unblushing bribery.

"Yes, he; he there. As he went up over hill to meeting he met my two boys a shep-minding; and, because the cutter was froze, he stop and turn the handle for 'em for a matter of ten minutes; and I was coming up over field, and says I, I'll hear what that chap's got to say—there can't be no harm in going up arter the likes of he; for, says I to myself, a man can't have got any great wickedness a plotting in he's head, when he'll stop a ten minutes to help two boys as he never sot eyes on afore in his life; and I think their honours 'll say the same."

Whether my reader will agree or not with the worthy fellow, my counsel, I need not say, did, and made full use of his hint. All the previous evidence was now discovered to have corroborated the last witness, except where it had been notoriously overthrown. I was extolled as a miracle of calm benevolence; and black became grey, and grey became spotless white, and the whole feeling of the court seemed changed in my favour; till the little attorney popped up his head and whispered to me:

"By George! that last witness has saved your life."

To which I answered, "Very well"—and turned

PRISONER

stupidly back upon that nightmare thought—was Lillian in the court?

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At last, a voice, the judge's I believe, for it was grave, gentle, almost compassionate, asked us one by one whether we had anything to say in our own defence. I recollect an indistinct murmur from one after another of the poor semi-brutes on my left; and then my attorney looking up to me, made me aware that I was expected to speak. On the moment, somehow, my whole courage returned to me. I felt that I must unburden my heart, now or never. With a sudden effort I roused myself, and looking fixedly and proudly at the reverend face opposite, began:

"The utmost offence which has been proved against me is a few bold words, producing consequences as unexpected as illogical. [If the stupid ferocity with which my words were misunderstood, as by a horde of savages rather than Englishmen;—if the moral and physical condition of these prisoners at my side;—of those witnesses who have borne testimony against me, miserable white slaves, miscalled free labourers;—ay, if a single walk through the farms and cottages on which this mischief was bred, affords no excuse for one indignant sentence——"]

[There she was! There she had been all the time —right opposite to me, close to the judge—cold, bright, curious—smiling! And as our eyes met, she turned away, and whispered gaily something to a young man who sat beside her.

Every drop of blood in my body rushed into my forehead; the court, the windows, and the faces, whirled round and round, and I fell senseless on the floor of the dock.

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I next recollect some room or other in the gaol, Mackaye with both my hands in his; and the rough kindly voice of the gaoler congratulating me on having "**only got three years.**"

"But you didn't show half a good pluck," said some one. ["There's two on 'em transported, took it as bold as brass, and thanked the judge for getting 'em out 'o this starving place 'free gracious for nothing,' says they."]

"Ah!" quoth the little attorney, rubbing his hands, "you should have seen * * * and * * * after the row in '42! They were the boys for the Bull Ring! Gave a barrister as good as he brought, eh, Mr. Mackaye? My small services, you remember, were of no use, really no use at all—quite ashamed to send in my little account. [Managed the case themselves, like two patriotic parties as they were, with a degree of forensic acuteness, inspired by the consciousness of a noble cause—Ahem!] You remember, friend M? Grand triumphs those, eh?"

"Ay," said Sandy, "I mind them unco weel—they cost me a' my few savings, mair by token; an' mony a braw fallow paid for ither folks' sins that tide. But my puir laddie here's no made o' that stuff. He's ower thin-skinned for a patriot."

S.
(law)

[“Ah, well—this little taste of British justice will thicken his hide for him, eh?” And the attorney chuckled and winked. “He’ll come out again as tough as a bull dog, and as surly too. Eh, Mr. Mackaye?—eh?”

“’Deed, then, I’m unco sair afeard that your opeenion is no a’thegither that improbable,” answered Sandy with a drawl of unusual solemnity.]

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CHAPTER XXX.

PRISON THOUGHTS.

I WAS alone in my cell.

Three years' imprisonment! Thirty-six months!—one thousand and ninety-five days—and twenty-four whole hours in each of them! Well—I should sleep half the time: one-third at least. Perhaps I should not be able to sleep! To lie awake, and think—there! the thought was horrible—it was all horrible. To have three whole years cut out of my life, instead of having before me, as I had always as yet had, a mysterious Eldorado of new schemes and hopes, possible developments, possible triumphs, possible bliss—to have nothing, nothing before me but blank and stagnation, dead loss and waste: and then to go out again, and start once more where I had left off yesterday!

It should not be! I would not lose these years! I would show myself a man; they should feel my strength just when they fancied they had crushed me utterly! They might bury me, but I should rise again!—I should rise again more glorious, perhaps to be henceforth immortal, and live upon the lips

PRISON

of men. I would educate myself; I would read—what would I not read? These three years should be a time of sacred retirement and contemplation, as of Thebaid Anchorite, or Mahomet in his Arabian cave. I would write pamphlets that should thunder through the land, and make tyrants tremble on their thrones! All England—at least all crushed and suffering hearts—should break forth at my fiery words into one roar of indignant sympathy. No—I would write a poem; I would concentrate all my experience, my aspirations, all the hopes, and wrongs, and sorrows of the poor, into one garland of thorns—one immortal epic of suffering. What should I call it? And I set to work deliberately—such a thing is man—to think of a title.

I looked up, and my eye caught the close bars of the little window; and then came over me, for the first time, the full meaning of that word—Prison; that word which the rich use so lightly, knowing well that there is no chance, in these days, of their ever finding themselves in one; for the higher classes never break the laws—seeing that they have made them to fit themselves. Ay, I was in prison. I could not go out or come in at will. I was watched, commanded at every turn. I was a brute animal, a puppet, a doll, that children put away in a cupboard, and there it lies. And yet my whole soul was as wide, fierce, roving, struggling as ever. Horrible contradiction! The dreadful sense of helplessness, the crushing weight of necessity, seemed to choke me. The smooth white

walls, the smooth white ceiling, seemed squeezing in closer and closer on me, and yet dilating into vast inane infinities, just as the merest knot of mould will transform itself, as one watches it, and nothing else, into enormous cliffs, long slopes of moor, and spurs of mountain-range. Oh, those smooth white walls and ceilings! If there had but been a print—a stain of dirt—a cobweb, to fleck their unbroken ghastliness! They stared at me, like grim, impassive, featureless formless fiends; all the more dreadful for their sleek, hypocritic cleanliness—purity as of a saint-inquisitor watching with spotless conscience the victim on the rack. They choked me—I gasped for breath, stretched out my arms, rolled shrieking on the floor—the narrow chequered glimpse of free blue sky, seen through the window, seemed to fade dimmer and dimmer, farther and farther off. I sprang up, as if to follow it—rushed to the bars, shook and wrenched at them with my thin, puny arms—and stood spell-bound, as I caught sight of the cathedral towers, standing out in grand repose against the horizontal fiery bars of sunset, like great angels at the gates of Paradise, watching in stately sorrow all the wailing and the wrong below. And beneath, beneath—the well-known roofs—Lillian's home, and all its proud and happy memories! It was but a corner of a gable, a scrap of garden, that I could see beyond intervening roofs and trees—but could I mistake them? There was the very cedar-tree; I knew its dark pyramid but too well! There I had walked by her; there, just behind that

envious group of chestnuts, she was now. The light was fading; it must be six o'clock; she must be in her room now, dressing herself for dinner, looking so beautiful! And as I gazed, and gazed, all the intervening objects became transparent and vanished before the intensity of my imagination. Were my poems in her room still? Perhaps she had thrown them away—the condemned rioter's poems! Was she thinking of me? Yes—with horror and contempt. [Well, at least she was thinking of me. And she would understand me at last—she must. Some day she would know all I had borne for love of her—the depth, the might, the purity of my adoration.] She would see the world honouring me, in the day of my triumph, when I was appreciated at last; when I stood before the eyes of admiring men, a people's singer, a king of human spirits, great with the rank which genius gives, then she would find out what a man had loved her: then she would know the honour, the privilege of a poet's worship.

——But that trial scene.

[Ay—[illegible]! —when she knew me, must have known me, not to be the wretch which those hired slanderers had called me. If she had cared for me—if she had a woman's heart in her at all, any pity, any justice, would she not have spoken? Would she not have called on others to speak, and clear me of the calumny?] Nonsense! Impossible! She—so frail, tender, retiring—how could she speak? How did I know that she had

not felt for me? It was woman's nature—duty, to conceal her feelings; perhaps that after all was the true explanation of that smile. Perhaps, too, she might have spoken—might be even now pleading for me in secret; not that I wished to be pardoned—not I—but it would be so delicious to have her, her, pleading for me! Perhaps—perhaps I might hear of her—from her! Surely she could not leave me here so close, without some token! And I actually listened, I know not how long, expecting the door to open, and a message to arrive; till, with my eyes riveted on that bit of gable, and my ears listening behind me like a hare's in her form, to catch every sound in the ward outside, I fell fast asleep, and forgot all in the heavy dreamless torpor of utter mental and bodily exhaustion.

I was awakened by the opening of my cell door and the appearance of the turnkey.

"Well, young man, all right again? You've had a long nap; and no wonder, you've had a hard time of it lately; and a good lesson to you, too."

"How long have I slept? I do not recollect going to bed. And how came I to lie down without undressing?"

"I found you, at lock-up hours, asleep there kneeling on the chair, with your head on the window-sill; and a mercy you hadn't tumbled off and broke your back. Now, look here.—You seems a civil sort of chap; and civil gets as civil gives with me. [Only don't you talk no politics. They ain't no good to

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nobody, except the big 'uns, wot gets their living thereby; and I should think you'd had dose enough on 'em to last for a month of Sundays. So just get yourself tidy, there's a lad, and come along with me to chapel."

I obeyed him, in that and other things; and I never received from him, or, indeed, from any one else there, ought but kindness. I have no complaint to make—but prison is prison. As for talking politics, I never, during those three years, exchanged as many sentences with any of my fellow-prisoners. What had I to say to them? Poachers and petty thieves—the scum of misery, ignorance, and rascality throughout the country. If my heart yearned toward them at times, it was generally shut close by the exclusive pride of superior intellect and knowledge. I considered it, as it was, a degradation to be classed with such; never asking myself how far I had brought that degradation on myself; and I loved to show my sense of injustice by walking, moody and silent, up and down a lonely corner of the yard; and at last contrived, under the plea of ill health (and truly, I never was ten minutes without coughing), to confine myself entirely to my cell, and escape altogether the company of a class whom I despised, almost hated, as my betrayers, before whom I had cast away my pearls—questionable though they were according to Mackaye. Oh! there is in the intellectual workman's heart, as in all others, the root of Pharisaism—the lust after self-glorifying superiority, on the ground of "genius."

DEMOCRATS | 3 YEARS

We too are men; frail, selfish, proud as others. The days are past, thank God, when the "gentlemen button-makers," used to insist on a separate tap-room from the mere "button-makers," on the ground of earning a few more shillings per week. But we are not yet thorough democrats, my brothers; we do not yet utterly believe our own loud doctrine of equality; nor shall we till—— But I must not anticipate the stages of my own experience.

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I complain of no one, again I say—neither of judge, jury, gaolers, nor chaplain. True, imprisonment was the worst possible remedy for my disease that could have been devised, if, as the new doctrine is, punishments are inflicted only to reform the criminal. What could prison do for me, but embitter and confirm all my prejudices? But I do not see what else they could have done with me while law is what it is, and perhaps ever will be; dealing with the overt acts of the poor, and never touching the subtler and more spiritual iniquities of the rich respectable. When shall we see a nation ruled, not by the law, by the Gospel; not in the letter which kills, but in the spirit which is love, forgiveness, life? When? God knows! And God does know.

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But I did work, during those three years, for months at a time, steadily and severely; and with little profit, alas! to my temper of mind. I gorged my intellect, for I could do nothing else. The politi-

cal questions which I longed to solve in some way or other, were tabooed by the well-meaning chaplain. He even forbid me a standard English work on political economy, which I had written to Mackaye to borrow for me; he was not so careful, it will be seen hereafter, with foreign books. (He meant, of course, to keep my mind from what he considered at once useless and polluting; but the only effect of his method was, that all the doubts and questions, remained, rankling and fierce, imperiously demanding my attention, and had to be solved by my own moody and soured meditations, warped and coloured by the strong sense of universal wrong.]

Then he deluged me with tracts, weak and well-meaning, which informed me that ["Christians," being "not of this world," had nothing to do with politics; and preached to me the divine right of kings, passive obedience to the powers—or impotences—that be,] etc. etc., with such success as may be imagined. I opened them each, read a few sentences, and laid them by. ["They were written by good men, no doubt; but men who had an interest in keeping up the present system;] at all events by men who knew nothing of my temptations, my creed, my unbelief; who saw all heaven and earth from a station antipodal to my own; I had simply nothing to do with them.

And yet, excellent man! pious, benignant, compassionate! God forbid that I should, in writing these words, allow myself a desire so base as that of disparaging thee! However thy words failed of their pur-

pose, that bright, gentle, earnest face never appeared without bringing balm to the wounded spirit. [Hadst thou not recalled me to humanity, those three years would have made a savage and madman of me.] May God reward thee hereafter! Thou hast thy reward on earth in the gratitude of many a broken heart bound up, of drunkards sobered, thieves reclaimed, and outcasts taught to look for a paternal home denied them here on earth! While such thy deeds, what matter thine opinions?

[But alas! (for the truth must be told, as a warning to those who have to face the educated working men), his opinions did matter to himself. The good man laboured under the delusion, common enough, of choosing his favourite weapons from his weakest faculty; and the very inferiority of his intellect prevented him from seeing where his true strength lay. He *would* argue; he would try and convert me from scepticism by what seemed to him reasoning, the common figure of which was, what logicians, I believe, call begging the question; and the common method, what they call *ignoratio elenchi*—shooting at pigeons, while crows are the game desired. He always started by demanding my assent to the very question which lay at the bottom of my doubts. He would wrangle and wrestle blindly up and down, with tears of earnestness in his eyes, till he had lost his temper, as far as it was possible for one so angel-guarded as he seemed to be; and then, when he found himself confused, contradicting his own words, making con-

cessions at which he shuddered, for the sake of gaining from me assents which he found out the next moment I understood in quite a different sense from his, he would suddenly shift his ground, and try to knock me down authoritatively with a single text of Scripture; when all the while I wanted proof that Scripture had any authority at all.

He carefully confined himself, too, throughout, to the dogmatic phraseology of the pulpit; while I either did not understand, or required justification for, the strange, far-fetched, technical meanings, which he attached to his expressions. If he would only have talked English!—if clergymen would only preach in English!—and then they wonder that their sermons have no effect! Their notion seems to be, as my good chaplain's was, that the teacher is not to condescend to the scholar, much less to become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some; but that he has a right to demand that the scholar shall ascend to him before he is taught; that he shall raise himself up of his own strength into the teacher's region of thought as well as feeling; to do for himself, in short, under penalty of being called an unbeliever, just what the preacher professes to do for him.

At last, he seemed dimly to discover that I could not acquiesce in his conclusions, while I denied his premises; and so he lent me, in an ill-starred moment, "Paley's Evidences," and some tracts of the last generation against Deism. I read them and remained, as hundreds more have done, just where I was before.

"Was Paley," I asked, "a really good and pious man?"

The really good and pious man hemmed and hawed.

"Because, if he was not, I can't trust a page of his special pleading, let it look as clever as the whole Old Bailey in one."

Besides, I never denied the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, or his apostles. I doubted the myths and doctrines, which I believed to have been gradually built up round the true story. The fact was, he was, like most of his class, "attacking extinct Satans," fighting manfully against Voltaire, Volney, and Tom Paine; while I was fighting for Strauss, Hennell, and Emerson. And, at last, he gave me up for some weeks as a hopeless infidel, without ever having touched the points on which I disbelieved. He had never read Strauss—hardly even heard of him; and, till clergymen make up their minds to do that, and to answer Strauss also, they will, as he did, leave the heretic artisan just where they found him.

The bad effect which all this had on my mind may easily be conceived. I felt myself his intellectual superior. I tripped him up, played with him, made him expose his weaknesses, till I really began to despise him. May Heaven forgive me for it! But it was not till long afterwards that I began, on looking back, to see how worthless was any superior cleverness of mine before his superior moral and spiritual excellence. That was just what he would not let me see at the time. I was worshipping intellect, mere intellect;

and thence arose my doubts; and he tried to conquer them by exciting the very faculty which had begotten them. [When will the clergy learn that their strength is in action, and not in argument? If they are to reconvert the masses, it must be by noble deeds, as Carlyle says; "not by noisy theoretic laudation of *a* Church, but by silent practical demonstration of *the* Church."]

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But, the reader may ask, where was your Bible all this time?

Yes—there was a Bible in my cell—and the chaplain read to me, both privately and in chapel, such portions of it as he thought suited my case, or rather his utterly mistaken view thereof. [But, to tell the truth, I cared not to read or listen. Was it not the book of the aristocrats—of kings and priests, passive obedience, and the slavery of the intellect? Had I been thrown under the influence of the more educated Independents in former years, I might have thought differently. They, at least, have contrived, with what logical consistence I know not, to reconcile orthodox Christianity with unflinching democratic opinions.] But such was not my lot. My mother, as I said in my first chapter, had become a Baptist; because she believed that sect, and as I think rightly, to be the only one which logically and consistently carries out the Calvinistic theory; and now I looked back upon her delight in Gideon and Barak, Samson and Jehu, only as the mystic application of rare ex-

ceptions to the fanaticism of a chosen few—the elect—the saints, who, as the fifth-monarchy men held, were one day to rule the world with a rod of iron. And so I fell—willingly, alas!—into the vulgar belief about the politics of Scripture, common alike—strange unanimity!—to Infidel and Churchman. [The great idea that the Bible is the history of mankind's deliverance from all tyranny, outward as well as inward; of the Jews, as the one free constitutional people among a world of slaves and tyrants; of their ruin, as the righteous fruit of a voluntary return to despotism; of the New Testament, as the good news that freedom, brotherhood, and equality, once confided only to Judæa and to Greece, and dimly seen even there, was henceforth to be the right of all mankind, the law of all society—who was there to tell me that? Who is there now to go forth and tell it to the millions who have suffered, and doubted, and despaired like me, and turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come? Again I ask—who will go forth and preach that Gospel, and save his native land?]

But, as I said before, I read, and steadily. In the first place, I, for the first time in my life, studied Shakspeare throughout; and found out now the treasure which I had overlooked. I assure my readers I am not going to give a lecture on him here, as I was minded to have done. Only, as I am asking questions, who will write us a "People's Commentary on Shakspeare"?

Then I waded, making copious notes and extracts, through the whole of Hume, and Hallam's "Middle Ages," and "Constitutional History," and found them barren to my soul. When (to ask a third and last question) will some man, of the spirit of Carlyle—one who is not ashamed to acknowledge the intervention of a God, a Providence, even of a devil, in the affairs of men—arise, and write a "People's History of England"?

[Then I laboured long months at learning French, for the mere purpose of reading French political economy after my liberation. But at last, in my impatience I wrote to Sandy to send me Proudhon and Louis Blanc, on the chance of their passing the good chaplain's censorship—and behold, they passed! He had never heard their names! He was, I suspect, utterly ignorant of French, and afraid of exposing his ignorance by venturing to criticise. As it was, I was allowed peaceable possession of them till within a few months of my liberation, with such consequences as may be imagined; and then, to his unfeigned terror and horror, he discovered, in some periodical, that he had been leaving in my hands books which advocated "the destruction of property," and therefore, in his eyes, of all which is moral or sacred in earth or heaven!] I gave them up without a struggle, so really painful was the good soul's concern and the reproaches which he heaped, not on me—he never reproached me in his life—but on himself, for having so neglected his duty.

[Then I read hard for a few months at physical science—at Zoology and Botany, and threw it aside again in bitterness of heart. It was too bitter to be tantalised with the description of Nature's wondrous forms, and I there a prisoner between those four white walls.]

Then I set to work to write an autobiography—at least to commit to paper in regular order the most striking incidents and conversations which I could recollect, and which I had noted down as they occurred in my diary. From that source I have drawn nearly the whole of my history up to this point. [For the rest I must trust to memory—and, indeed, the strange deeds and sufferings, and yet stranger revelations, of the last few months, have branded themselves deep enough upon my brain.] I need not hope, or fear, that aught of them should slip my memory.

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So went the weary time. [Week after week, month after month, summer after summer, I scored the days off, like a lonely schoolboy, on the pages of a calendar; and day by day I went to my window, and knelt there, gazing at the gable and the cedar-tree. That was my only recreation. Sometimes, at first, my eyes used to wander over the wide prospect of rich lowlands, and farms, and hamlets, and I used to amuse myself with conjectures about the people who lived in them, and walked where they liked on God's earth: but soon I hated to look at the country; its perpetual

change and progress mocked the dreary sameness of my dungeon. It was bitter, maddening, to see the grey boughs grow green, with leaves, and the green fade to autumnal yellow, and the grey boughs reappear again, and I still there! The dark sleeping fallows bloomed with emerald blades of corn, and then the corn grew deep and crisp, and blackened before the summer breeze, in "waves of shadow," as Mr. Tennyson says in one of his most exquisite lyrics; and then the fields grew white to harvest day by day, and I saw the rows of sheaves rise one by one, and the carts crawling homeward under their load. I could almost hear the merry voices of the children round them—children that could go into the woods, and pick wild-flowers, and I still there! No—I would look at nothing but the gable and the cedar-tree, and the tall cathedral towers; there was no change in them—they did not laugh at me.

But she who lived beneath them? Months and seasons crawled along, and yet no sign or hint of her! I was forgotten, forsaken! And yet I gazed, and gazed. I could not forget her; I could not forget what she had been to me. Eden was still there, though I was shut out from it for ever: and so, like a widower over the grave of her he loves, morning and evening I watched the gable and the cedar-tree.

And my cousin? Ah, that was the thought, the only thought, which made my life intolerable! What might he not be doing in the meantime? I knew his purpose, I knew his power. True, I had never seen

a hint, a glance, which could have given him hope; but he had three whole years to win her in—three whole years, and I fettered, helpless, absent! "Fool! could I have won her if I had been free? At least, I would have tried: we would have fought it fairly out, on even ground; we would have seen which was the strongest, respectability and cunning, or the simplicity of genius. But now!"—And I tore at the bars of the window, and threw myself on the floor of my cell, and longed to die.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE NEW CHURCH.

In a poor suburb of the city, which I could see well enough from my little window, a new Gothic church was building. When I first took up my abode in the cell, it was just begun—the walls had hardly risen above the neighbouring sheds and garden-fences. But month after month I had watched it growing; I had seen one window after another filled with tracery, one buttress after another finished off with its carved pinnacle; then I had watched the skeleton of the roof gradually clothed in tiling; and then the glazing of the windows—some of them painted, I could see, from the iron network which was placed outside them the same day. Then the doors were put up—were they going to finish that handsome tower? No: it was left with its wooden cap, I suppose for further funds. But the nave, and the deep chancel behind it, were all finished, and surmounted by a cross,—and beautifully enough the little sanctuary looked, in the virgin-purity of its spotless freestone. For eighteen months I watched it grow before my eyes—and I was still in my cell!

And then there was a grand procession of surplices and lawn sleeves; and among them I fancied I distinguished the old dean's stately figure, and turned my head away, and looked again, and fancied I distinguished another figure—it must have been mere imagination—the distance was far too great for me to identify any one; but I could not get out of my head the fancy—say rather, the instinct—that it was my cousin's; and that it was my cousin whom I saw daily after that, coming out and going in—when the bell rang to morning and evening prayers—for there were daily services there, and saint's day services, and Lent services, and three services on a Sunday, and six or seven on Good Friday and Easter-day. The little musical bell above the chancel-arch seemed always ringing: and still that figure haunted me like a nightmare, ever coming in and going out about its priestly calling—and I still in my cell! If it should be he!—so close to her! I shuddered at the thought; and, just because it was so intolerable, it clung to me, and tormented me, and kept me awake at nights, till I became utterly unable to study quietly, and spent hours at the narrow window, watching for the very figure I loathed to see.

And then a Gothic school-house rose at the churchyard end, and troops of children poured in and out, and women came daily for alms; and when the frosts came on, every morning I saw a crowd, and soup carried away in pitchers, and clothes and blankets given away; the giving seemed endless, boundless;

and I thought of the times of the Roman Empire and the "sportula," when the poor had got to live upon the alms of the rich, more and more, year by year—till they devoured their own devourers, and the end came; and I shuddered. And yet it was a pleasant sight, as every new church is to the healthy-minded man, let his religious opinions be what they may. A fresh centre of civilisation, mercy, comfort for weary hearts, relief from frost and hunger; a fresh centre of instruction, humanising, disciplining, however meagre in my eyes, to hundreds of little savage spirits; altogether a pleasant sight, even to me there in my cell. And I used to wonder at the wasted power of the Church—her almost entire monopoly of the pulpits, the schools, the alms of England; and then thank Heaven, somewhat prematurely, that she knew and used so little her vast latent power for the destruction of liberty.

Or for its realisation?

Ay, that is the question! We shall not see it solved—at least, I never shall.

But still that figure haunted me; all through that winter I saw it, chatting with old women, patting children's heads, walking to the church with ladies; sometimes with a tiny, tripping figure.—I did not dare to let myself fancy who that might be.

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December passed, and January came. I had now only two months more before my deliverance. One day I seemed to myself to have passed a whole life

in that narrow room; and the next, the years and months seemed short and blank as a night's sleep on waking; and there was no salient point in all my memory, since that last sight of Lillian's smile, and the faces and the window whirling round me as I fell.

At last a letter came from Mackaye. "Ye speired for news o' your cousin—an' I find he's a neebour o' yours; ca'd to a new kirk i' the city o' your captivity —an' na stickit minister he makes, forbye he's ane o' these new Puseyite sectarians, to judge by your uncle's report. I met the auld bailie-bodie on the street, and was gaun to pass him by, but he was sae fou o' good news he could na but stop an' ha' a crack wi' me on politics; for we ha' helpit thegither in certain municipal clamjamfries o' late. An' he told me your cousin wins honour fast, an' maun surely die a bishop—puir bairn! An' besides that he's gaun to be married the spring. I dinna mind the leddy's name; but there's tocher wi' lass o' his I'll warrant. He's na laird o' Cockpen, for a penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree."

As I sat meditating over this news—which made the torment of suspicion and suspense more intolerable than ever—behold a postscript added some two days after.

"Oh! Oh! Sic news! gran news—news to make baith the ears o' him that heareth it to tingle. God is God, an' no the deevil after a'! Louis Philippe is doun!—doun, doun, like a dog, and the republic's proclaimed, an' the auld villain here in England, they say, a wanderer an' a beggar. I ha' sent ye the paper o'

the day. Ps.—73. 37. 12. Oh, the Psalms are full o't! Never say the Bible's no true, mair. I've been unco faithless mysel', God forgive me! I got grieving to see the wicked in sic prosperity. [I did na gang into the sanctuary eneugh, an' therefore I could na see the end of these men—]how He does take them up suddenly after all, an' cast them doun: vanish they do, perish, an' come to a fearful end. [Yea, like as a dream when one awaketh,] so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city. Oh, but it's a day o' God! An' yet I'm sair afraid for they puir feckless French. I ha' na faith, ye ken, in the Celtic blude, an' its spirit o' lees. The Saxon spirit o' covetize is a grewsome house-fiend, and sae's our Norse speerit o' shifts an' dodges; but the spirit o' lees is warse. Puir lustful Reubens that they are!—[unstable as water, they shall not excel.] Well, well—after all, there is a God that judgeth the earth; an' when a man [illegible], he's learnt eneugh to last him till he dies".

PRISON

Part VI.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

"A glorious people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations; Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er France,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay;
And in the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself sublime and strong."

SUBLIME and strong? Alas! not so. An outcast, heartless, faithless, and embittered, I went forth from my prison.—But yet Louis Philippe had fallen! And as I whirled back to Babylon and want, discontent and discord, my heart was light, my breath came thick and fierce.—The incubus of France had fallen! and from land to land, like the Beacon-fire which leaped from peak to peak proclaiming Troy's downfall, passed on the glare of burning idols, the crash of falling anarchies. Was I mad, sinful? Both—and yet neither. Was I mad and sinful, if on my return to my old haunts, amid the grasp of loving hands and the caresses of those who called me in their honest flattery a martyr and a hero—what things, as Carlyle says, men will fall down and worship in their extreme

need!—[was I mad and sinful, if daring hopes arose, and desperate words were spoken, and wild eyes read in wild eyes the thoughts they dare not utter? "Liberty has risen from the dead, and we too will be free!"]

[Yes, mad and sinful; therefore are we as we are. Yet God has forgiven us—perhaps so have those men whose forgiveness is alone worth having.

Liberty? And is that word a dream, a lie, the watchword only of rebellious fiends, as bigots say even now? Our forefathers spoke not so—

> "The shadow of her coming fell
> On Saxon Alfred's olive-tinctured brow."

(Had not freedom, progressive, expanding, descending, been the glory and the strength of England? Were Magna Charta and the Habeas Corpus Act, Hampden's resistance to ship-money, and the calm, righteous might of 1688—were they all futilities and fallacies? Ever downwards, for seven hundred years, welling from the heaven-watered mountain peaks of wisdom, had spread the stream of liberty. The nobles had gained their charter from John; the middle classes from William of Orange: was not the time at hand, when from a queen, more gentle, charitable, upright, spotless, than had ever sat on the throne of England, the working masses in their turn should gain their Charter?)

If it was given, the gift was hers: if it was demanded to the uttermost, the demand would be made, not on her, but on those into whose hands her power

had passed, the avowed representatives neither of the Crown nor of the people, but of the very commercial class which was devouring us.

Such was our dream. Insane and wicked were the passions which accompanied it; insane and wicked were the means we chose; and God in His mercy to us, rather than to Mammon, triumphant in his iniquity, fattening his heart even now for a spiritual day of slaughter more fearful than any physical slaughter which we in our folly had prepared for him—God frustrated them.

We confess our sins. Shall the Chartist alone be excluded from the promise, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"?

And yet, were there no excuses for us? I do not say for myself—~~and yet three years of~~ prison might ~~be some excuse~~ for a soured and hardened ~~spirit~~—but I will not avail myself of the excuse; for there were men, stancher Chartists than ever I had been—men who had suffered not only imprisonment, but loss of health and loss of fortune; men whose influence with the workmen was far wider than my own, and whose temptations were therefore all the greater, who manfully and righteously kept themselves aloof from all those frantic schemes, and now reap their reward, in being acknowledged as the true leaders of the artisans, while the mere preachers of sedition are scattered to the winds.

But were there no excuses for the mass? Was

there no excuse in the spirit with which the English upper classes regarded the continental revolutions? No excuse in the undisguised dislike, fear, contempt, which they expressed for that very sacred name of Liberty, which had been for ages the pride of England and her laws—

> "The old laws of England, they
> Whose reverend heads with age are grey—
> Children of a wiser day—
> And whose solemn voice must be
> Thine own echo, Liberty!"

for which, according to the latest improvements, is now substituted a bureaucracy of despotic commissions? Shame upon those who sneered at the very name of her to whom they owed the wealth they idolise! who cry down liberty because God has given it to them in such priceless abundance, boundless as the sunshine and the air of heaven, that they are become unconscious of it as of the elements by which they live! Woe to those who despise the gift of God! Woe to those who have turned His grace into a cloak for tyranny; who, like the Jews of old, have trampled under foot His covenant at the very moment that they were asserting their exclusive right to it, and denying His all-embracing love!

And were there no excuses, too, in the very arguments which nineteen-twentieths of the public press used to deter us from following the example of the Continent? If there had been one word of sympathy with the deep wrongs of France, Germany, Italy,

Hungary—one attempt to discriminate the righteous and God-inspired desire of freedom, from man's furious and self-willed perversion of it, we would have listened to them. But, instead, what was the first, last, cardinal, crowning argument?—"The cost of sedition!" "Revolutions interfered with trade!" and therefore they were damnable! Interfere with the food and labour of the millions? The millions would take the responsibility of that upon themselves. If the party of order cares so much for the millions, why had they left them what they are? No: it was with the profits of the few that revolutions interfered; with the Divine right, not so much of kings, but of money-making. They hampered Mammon, the very fiend who is devouring the masses. The one end and aim of existence was, the maintenance of order—of peace and room to make money in. And therefore Louis' spies might make France one great inquisition-hell; German princelets might sell their country piecemeal to French or Russian! the Hungarian constitution, almost the counterpart of our own, might be sacrificed at the will of an idiot or villain; Papal misgovernment might continue to render Rome a worse den of thieves than even Papal superstition could have made it without the addition of tyranny; but Order must be maintained, for how else could the few make money out of the labour of the many? These were their own arguments. Whether they were likely to conciliate the workman to the powers that be, by informing him that those powers were avowedly the

priests of the very system which was crushing him, let the reader judge.

The maintenance of order—of the order of disorder—that was to be the new God before whom the working classes were to bow in spell-bound awe; an idol more despicable and empty than even that old divine right of tyrants, newly applied by some well-meaning but illogical personages, not merely as of old to hereditary sovereigns, but to Louis Philippes, usurers, upstarts—why not hereafter to demagogues? Blindfold and desperate bigots! who would actually thus, in the imbecility of terror, deify that very right of the physically strongest and cunningest, which, if anything, is antichrist itself. That argument against sedition, the workmen heard; and, recollecting 1688, went on their way, such as it was, unheeding.

One word more, even at the risk of offending many whom I should be very sorry to offend, and I leave this hateful discussion. Let it ever be remembered that the working classes considered themselves deceived, cajoled, by the passers of the Reform Bill; that they cherished—whether rightly or wrongly it is now too late to ask—a deep-rooted grudge against those who had, as they thought, made their hopes and passions a stepping-stone towards their own selfish ends. They were told to support the Reform Bill, not only on account of its intrinsic righteousness—which God forbid that I should deny—but because it was the first of a glorious line of steps towards their enfranchisement; and now the very men who told

them this, talked peremptorily of "finality," showed themselves the most dogged and careless of conservatives, and pooh-poohed away every attempt at further enlargement of the suffrage. They were told to support it as the remedy for their own social miseries; and behold those miseries were year by year becoming deeper, more wide-spread, more hopeless; their entreaties for help and mercy, in 1842, and at other times, had been lazily laid by unanswered; and almost the only practical efforts for their deliverance had been made by a Tory nobleman, the honoured and beloved Lord Ashley. They found that they had, in helping to pass the Reform Bill, only helped to give power to the two very classes who crushed them—the great labour kings, and the small shopkeepers; that they had blindly armed their oppressors with the additional weapon of an ever-increasing political majority. They had been told, too (let that never be forgotten), that in order to carry the Reform Bill, sedition itself was lawful; they had seen the master-manufacturers themselves give the signal for the plug-riots by stopping their mills. Their vanity, ferocity, sense of latent and fettered power, pride of numbers, and physical strength, had been flattered and pampered by those who now only talked of grape-shot and bayonets. They had heard the Reform Bill carried by the threats of men of rank and power, that "Manchester should march upon London." Were their masters, then, to have a monopoly in sedition, as in everything else? What had been fair in order to

compel the Reform Bill must surely be fairer still to compel the fulfilment of Reform Bill pledges! And so, imitating the example of those who they fancied had first used and then deserted them, they, in their madness, concocted a rebellion, not primarily against the laws and constitution of their land, but against Mammon—against that accursed system of competition, slavery of labour, absorption of the small capitalists by the large ones, and of the workman by all, which is, and was, and ever will be, their internecine foe. Silly and sanguinary enough were their schemes, God knows! and bootless enough had they succeeded; for nothing flourishes in the revolutionary atmosphere but that lowest embodiment of Mammon—"the black pool of Agio," and its money-gamblers. But the battle remains still to be fought; the struggle is internecine; only no more with weapons of flesh and blood, but with a mightier weapon—with that Association which is the true bane of Mammon—the embodiment of brotherhood and love.

We should have known that before the tenth of April. Most true, reader—but wrath is blindness. You too surely have read more wisdom than you have practised yet; seeing that you have your Bible, and perhaps, too, Mill's "Political Economy." Have you perused therein the priceless Chapter "On the Probable Futurity of the Labouring Classes"? If not, let me give you the reference—vol. ii. p. 315, of the Second Edition. Read it, thou self-satisfied Mammon, and perpend; for it is both a prophecy and a doom!

. . . . .

But, the reader may ask, how did you, with your experience of the reason, honesty, moderation, to be expected of mobs, join in a plan which, if it had succeeded, must have let loose on those "who had" in London, the whole flood of those "who had not"?

The reader shall hear. My story may be instructive, as a type of the feelings of thousands beside me.

It was the night after I had returned from D * * * *; sitting in Crossthwaite's little room, I had heard with mingled anxiety and delight the plans of my friends. They were about to present a monster petition in favour of the Charter; to accompany it *en masse* to the door of the House of Commons; and if it was refused admittance—why, then, ulterior measures were the only hope. "And they will refuse it," said Crossthwaite; "they're going, I hear, to revive some old law or other, that forbids processions within such and such a distance of the House of Commons." Let them forbid! To carry arms, to go in public procession, to present petitions openly, instead of having them made a humbug of by being laid on the table unopened by some careless member—they're our rights, and we'll have them. There's no use mincing the matter: it's just like the old fable of the farmer and his wheat—if we want it reaped, we must reap it ourselves. Public opinion, and the pressure from without, are the only things which have carried any measure in England for the last twenty years. Neither Whigs nor Tories deny it: the governed govern their

governors—that's the 'ordre du jour' just now—and we'll have our turn at it! We'll give those House of Commons oligarchs—those tools of the squires and shopkeepers—we'll give them a taste of pleasure from without, as shall make the bar of the house crack again. And then to be under arms, day and night, till the Charter's granted."

"And if it is refused?"

"Fight! that's the word, and no other. There's no other hope. No Charter,—No social reforms! We must give them ourselves, for no one else will. Look there, and judge for yourself!"

He pulled a letter out from among his papers, and threw it across to me.

"What's this?"

"That came while you were in gaol. There don't want many words about it. We sent up a memorial to Government about the army and police clothing. We told 'em how it was the lowest, most tyrannous, most ill-paid of all the branches of slop-making; how men took to it only when they were starved out of everything else. We entreated them to have mercy on us—entreated them to interfere between the merciless contractors and the poor wretches on whose flesh and blood contractors, sweaters, and colonels, were all fattening: and there's the answer we got. Look at it; read it! Again and again I've been minded to placard it on the walls, that all the world might see the might and the mercies of the Government. Read it! 'Sorry to say that it is utterly out

of the power of her Majesty's * * * s to interfere—as the question of wages rests entirely between the contractor and the workmen.'"

"He lies!" I said. "If it did, the workmen might put a pistol to the contractor's head and say—'You shall not tempt the poor, needy, greedy, starving workers to their own destruction, and the destruction of their class; you shall not offer these murderous, poisonous prices. If we saw you offering our neighbour a glass of laudanum, we would stop you at all risks—and we will stop you now.' No! no! John, the question don't lie between workman and contractor, but between workman and contractor-plus-grape-and-bayonets!"

"Look again. There's worse comes after that. 'If Government did interfere, it would not benefit the workman, as his rate of wages depends entirely on the amount of competition between the workmen themselves.' Yes, my dear children, you must eat each other; we are far too fond parents to interfere with so delightful an amusement! Curse them—sleek, hard-hearted, impotent do-nothings! They confess themselves powerless against competition—powerless against the very devil that is destroying us, faster and faster every year! They can't help us on a single point. They can't check population; and if they could, they can't get rid of the population which exists. They daren't give us a comprehensive emigration scheme. They daren't lift a finger to prevent gluts in the labour market. They daren't interfere between slave and

slave, between slave and tyrant. They are cowards, and like cowards they shall fall!"

"Ay—like cowards they shall fall!" I answered; and from that moment I was a rebel and a conspirator.

"And will the country join us?"

"The cities will; never mind the country. They are too weak to resist their own tyrants—and they are too weak to resist us. The country's always drivelling in the background. A country-party's sure to be a party of imbecile bigots. Nobody minds them."

I laughed. "It always was so, John. When Christianity first spread, it was in the cities—till a pagan, a villager, got to mean a heathen for ever and ever."

"And so it was in the French revolution; when Popery had died out of all the rest of France, the priests and the aristocrats still found their dupes in the remote provinces."

"The sign of a dying system that, to be sure. Woe to Toryism and the Church of England, and everything else, when it gets to boasting that its stronghold is still the hearts of the agricultural poor. It is the cities, John, the cities, where the light dawns first—where man meets man, and spirit quickens spirit, and intercourse breeds knowledge, and knowledge sympathy, and sympathy enthusiasm, combination, power irresistible; while the agriculturists remain ignorant, selfish, weak, because they are isolated from each other. Let the country go. The towns shall win

the Charter for England! And then for social reform, sanitary reform, ædile reform, cheap food, interchange of free labour, liberty, equality, and brotherhood for ever!"

Such was our Babel-tower, whose top should reach to heaven. To understand the allurement of that dream, you must have lain, like us, for years in darkness and the pit. You must have struggled for bread, for lodging, for cleanliness, for water, for education—all that makes life worth living for—and found them becoming, year by year, more hopelessly impossible, if not to yourself, yet still to the millions less gifted than yourself; you must have sat in darkness and the shadow of death, till you are ready to welcome any ray of light, even though it should be the glare of a volcano.

Alton Crosthwaite, Kelly, & Mark expose Powers. Alton & Crosthwaite discuss the principles behind violent revolution.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A PATRIOT'S REWARD.

I NEVER shall forget one evening's walk, as Crosthwaite and I strode back together from the Convention. We had walked on some way arm in arm in silence, under the crushing and embittering sense of having something to conceal—something, which if those who passed us so carelessly in the street had known——! It makes a villain and a savage of a man, that consciousness of a dark, hateful secret. And it was a hateful one!—a dark and desperate necessity, which we tried to call by noble names, that faltered on our lips as we pronounced them; for the spirit of God was not in us; and instead of bright hope, and the clear fixed lodestar of duty, weltered in our imaginations a wild possible future of tumult, and flame, and blood.

"It must be done!—it shall be done!—it will be done!" burst out John, at last, in that positive, excited tone, which indicated a half disbelief of his own words. "I've been reading Machiavelli on [illegible] warfare; and I see the way as clear as day."

I felt nothing but the dogged determination of despair. "It must be tried, if the worst comes to

the worst—but I have no hope. I read Somerville's answer to that Colonel Macerone. Ten years ago he showed it was impossible. We cannot stand against artillery; we have no arms."

"I'll tell you where to buy plenty. There's a man, Power, or Bower, he's sold hundreds in the last few days; and he understands the matter. He tells us we're certain, safe. There are hundreds of young men in the Government offices ready to join, if we do but succeed at first. It all depends on that. The first hour settles the fate of a revolution."

["If we succeed, yes—the cowardly world will always side with the conquering party; and we shall have every pickpocket and ruffian in our wake, plundering in the name of liberty and order."

"Then we'll shoot them like dogs, as the French did! 'Mort aux voleurs' shall be the word!"]

"Unless they shoot us. The French had a national guard, who had property to lose, and took care of it. The shopkeepers here will be all against us; they'll all be sworn in special constables, to a man; and between them and the soldiers, we shall have three to one upon us."

"Oh! that Power assures me the soldiers will fraternise. He says there are three regiments at least have promised solemnly to shoot their officers, and give up their arms to the mob."

"Very important, if true—and very scoundrelly, too. I'd sooner be shot myself by fair fighting, than see officers shot by cowardly treason."

"Well, it's ugly. I like fair play as well as any man. But it can't be done. There must be a surprise, a *coup de main*, as the French say" (poor Crossthwaite was always quoting French in those days). "Once show our strength—burst upon the tyrants like a thunderclap; and then!—

> "Men of England, heirs of glory,
> Heroes of unwritten story,
> Rise, shake off the chains like dew
> Which in sleep have fallen on you!
> Ye are many, they are few!"

"That's just what I am afraid they are not. Let's go and find out this man Power, and hear his authority for the soldier-story. Who knows him?"

"Why, Mike Kelly and he had been a deal together of late, Kelly's a true heart now—a true Irishman ready for anything. Those Irish are the boys, after all—though I don't deny they do bluster and have their way a little too much in the Convention. But still Ireland's wrongs are England's. We have the same oppressors. We must make common cause against the tyrants."

"I wish to Heaven they would just have stayed at home, and ranted on the other side of the water; they had their own way there, and no Mammonite middle-class to keep them down; and yet they never did an atom of good. Their eloquence is all bombast, and what's more, Crossthwaite, though there are some fine fellows among them, nine-tenths are liars—liars in grain, and you know it——"

Crossthwaite turned angrily to me. ["Why, you are getting as reactionary as old Mackaye himself!"]

"I am not—and he is not. I am ready to die on a barricade to-morrow, if it comes to that. [I haven't six months' lease of life—I am going into consumption; and a bullet is as easy a death as spitting up my lungs piecemeal. But I despise these Irish, because I can't trust them—they can't trust each other—they can't trust themselves. You know as well as I that you can't get common justice done in Ireland, because you can depend upon no man's oath. You know as well as I, that in Parliament or out, nine out of ten of them will stick at no lie, even if it has been exposed and refuted fifty times over, provided it serves the purpose of the moment; and I often think that, after all, Mackaye's right, and what's the matter with Ireland, is just that and nothing else—that from the nobleman in his castle to the beggar on his dunghill, they are a nation of liars, John Crossthwaite!"]

["Sandy's a prejudiced old Scotchman."

"Sandy's a wiser man than you or I, and you know it."

"Oh, I don't deny that; but he's getting old, and I think he has been failing in his mind of late."

"I'm afraid he's failing in his health; he has never been the same man since they hooted him down in John Street.] But he hasn't altered in his opinions one jot; and I'll tell you what—I believe he's right. I'll die in this matter like a man, because it's the

cause of liberty; but I've fearful misgivings about it, just because Irishmen are at the head of it."

"Of course they are—they have the deepest wrongs; and that makes them most earnest in the cause of right. The sympathy of suffering, as they say themselves, has bound them to the English working man against the same oppressors."

"Then let them fight those oppressors at home, and we'll do the same: that's the true way to show sympathy. Charity begins at home. They are always crying 'Ireland for the Irish;' why can't they leave England for the English?"

"You're envious of O'Connor's power!"

"Say that again, John Crossthwaite, and we part for ever!" And I threw off his arm indignantly.

"No—but—don't let's quarrel, my dear old fellow—now, that perhaps, perhaps we may never meet again—but I can't bear to hear the Irish abused. They're noble, enthusiastic, generous fellows. If we English had half as warm hearts, we shouldn't be as we are now; and O'Connor's a glorious man, I tell you. Just think of him, the descendant of the ancient kings, throwing away his rank, his name, all he had in the world for the cause of the suffering millions!"

"That's a most aristocratic speech, John," said I, smiling, in spite of my gloom. "So you keep a leader because he's descended from ancient kings, do you? I should prefer him just because he was not—just because he was a working man, and come of workmen's blood. We shall see whether he's stanch after all. To

my mind, little Cuffy's worth a great deal more, as far as earnestness goes."

"Oh! Cuffy's a low-bred, uneducated fellow."

"Aristocrat again, John!" said I, as we went upstairs to Kelly's room. And Crossthwaite did not answer.

There was so great a hubbub inside Kelly's room of English, French, and Irish, all talking at once, that we knocked at intervals for full five minutes unheard by the noisy crew; and I, in despair, was trying the handle, which was fast, when, to my astonishment, a heavy blow was struck on the panel from the inside, and the point of a sharp instrument driven right through close to my knees, with the exclamation—

"What do you think o' that, now, in a policeman's bread-basket?"

"I think," answered I, as loud as I dare, and as near the dangerous door, "if I intended really to use it, I wouldn't make such a fool's noise about it."

There was a dead silence; the door was hastily opened, and Kelly's nose poked out; while we, in spite of the horribleness of the whole thing, could not help laughing at his face of terror. Seeing who we were, he welcomed us in at once, into a miserable apartment, full of pikes and daggers, brandished by some dozen miserable, ragged, half-starved artisans. Three-fourths I saw at once, were slop-working tailors. There was a bloused and bearded Frenchman or two; but the majority were, as was to have been expected, the oppressed, the starved, the untaught, the despairing, the

insane; "the dangerous classes," which society creates, and then shrinks in horror, like Frankenstein, from the monster her own clumsy ambition has created. Thou Frankenstein Mammon! hast thou not had warnings enough, either to make thy machines like men, or stop thy bungling, and let God make them for Himself?

I will not repeat what I heard there. There is many a frantic ruffian of that night now sitting "in his right mind"—though not yet "clothed"—waiting for God's deliverance, rather than his own.

We got Kelly out of the room into the street, and began inquiring of him the whereabouts of this said Bower or Power. "He didn't know,"—the feather-headed Irishman that he was!—"Faix, by-the-by, he'd forgotten—an' he went to look for him at the place he tould him, and they didn't know sich a one there——"

"Oh, oh! Mr. Power has an *alibi*, then? Perhaps an *alias* too?"

"He didn't know his name rightly. Some said it was Brown; but he was a broth of a boy—a thrue people's man. Bedad, he gov' away arms afthen and afthen to them that couldn't buy 'em. An' he's as free-spoken—och, but he's put me into the confidence! Come down the street a bit, and I'll tell yees—I'll be Lord-Lieutenant o' Dublin Castle meself, if it succades, as shure as there's no snakes in ould Ireland, an' revenge her wrongs ankle deep in the bhlood o' the Saxon! Whirroo! for the marthyred memory o' the three hundred thousint vargens o' Wexford!"

"Hold your tongue, you ass!" said Crossthwaite, as he clapped his hand over his mouth, expecting every moment to find us all three in the Rhadamanthine grasp of a policeman; while I stood laughing, as people will, for mere disgust at the ridiculous, which almost always intermingles with the horrible.

At last, out it came——

"Bedad! we're going to do it! London's to be set o' fire in seventeen places at the same moment, an' I'm to light two of them to me own self, and make a holy-crust—ay, that's the word—o' Ireland's scorpions, to sting themselves to death in circling flame——"

"You would not do such a villanous thing?" cried we, both at once.

"Bedad! but I won't harm a hair o' their heads! Shure, we'll save the women and childer alive, and run for the fire-ingins our blessed selves, and then out with the pikes, and seize the Bank and the Tower—

"An' av' I lives, I lives victhorious,
An' av' I dies, my soul in glory is;
Love fa—a—are—well!"

I was getting desperate: the whole thing seemed at once so horrible and so impossible. There must be some villanous trap at the bottom of it.

"If you don't tell me more about this fellow Power, Mike," said I, "I'll blow your brains out on the spot: either you or he are villains." And I valiantly pulled out my only weapon, the door key, and put it to his head.

"Och! are you mad, thin? He's a broth of a boy;

and I'll tell ye. Shure he knows all about the red-coats, case he's an arthillery man himself, and that's the way he's found out his gran' combustible."

"An artilleryman?" said John. "He told me he was a writer for the press."

"Bedad, thin, he's mistaken himself intirely; for he tould me with his own mouth. And I'll show you the thing he sowld me as is to do it. Shure, it'll set fire to the stones o' the street, av' you pour a bit vitriol on it."

"Set fire to the stones? I must see that before I believe it."

"Shure an' ye shall then. Where'll I buy a bit? Sorra a shop is there open this time o' night; an' troth I forgot the name o' it intirely! Poker o' Moses, but here's a bit in my pocket!"

And out of his tattered coat-tail he lugged a flask of powder and a lump of some cheap chemical salt, whose name I have, I am ashamed to say, forgotten.

K. "You're a pretty fellow to keep such things in the same pocket with gunpowder!"

"Come along to Mackaye's," said Crossthwaite. "I'll see to the bottom of this. Be hanged, but I think the fellow's a cursed *mouchard*—some Government spy!"

"Spy is he, thin? Och, the thief o' the world! I'll stab him! I'll murther him! an' burn the town afterwards, all the same."

"Unless," said I, "just as you've got your precious combustible to blaze off, up he comes from behind

the corner and gives you in charge to a policeman. It's a villanous trap, you miserable fool, as sure as the moon's in heaven."

"Upon my word, I am afraid it is—and I'm trapped too."

"Blood and turf! thin, it's he that I'll trap, thin. There's two million free and inlightened Irishmen in London, to avenge my marthyrdom wi' pikes and baggonets like raving salviges, and blood for blood!"

"Like savages, indeed!" said I to Crossthwaite. "And pretty savage company we are keeping. Liberty, like poverty, makes a man acquainted with strange companions!"

"And who's made 'em savages? Who has left them savages? That the greatest nation of the earth has had Ireland in her hands three hundred years—and her people still to be savages!—if that don't justify a revolution, what does? Why, it's just because these poor brutes are what they are, that rebellion becomes a sacred duty. It's for them—for such fools, brutes, as that there, and the millions more like him, and likely to remain like him, and I've made up my mind to do or die to-morrow!"

There was a grand half-truth, distorted, miscoloured in the words, that silenced me for the time.

We entered Mackaye's door; strangely enough at that time of night, it stood wide open. What could be the matter? I heard loud voices in the inner room, and ran forward calling his name, when, to my astonishment, out past me rushed a tall man, followed by a

steaming kettle, which, missing him, took full effect on Kelly's chest as he stood in the entry, filling his shoes with boiling water, and producing a roar that might have been heard at Temple Bar.

"What's the matter?"

"Have I hit him?" said the old man, in a state of unusual excitement.

"Bedad! it was the man Power! the cursed spy! An' just as I was going to slate the villain nately, came the kittle, and kilt me all over!"

"Power? He's as many names as a pickpocket, and as many callings, too, I'll warrant. He came sneaking in to tell me the sogers were a' ready to gie up their arms if I'd come forward to them to-morrow. So I tauld him, sin' he was so sure o't, he'd better gang and tak the arms himsel; an' then he let out he'd been a policeman—"

"A policeman!" said both Crossthwaite and Kelly, with strong expletives.

"A policeman doon in Manchester; I thought I kenned his face fra the first. And when the rascal saw he'd let out too much, he wanted to mak' out that he'd been a' along a spy for the Chartists, while he was makin' believe to be a spy o' the Goovernment's. Sae when he cam' that far, I just up wi' the het water, and bleezed awa at him; an' noo I maun gang and het some mair for my drap toddy."

Sandy had a little vitriol in the house, so we took the combustible down into the cellar, and tried it. It blazed up: but burnt the stone as much as the reader

may expect. We next tried it on a lump of wood. It just scorched the place where it lay, and then went out; leaving poor Kelly perfectly frantic with rage, terror, and disappointment. He dashed upstairs, and out into the street, on a wild-goose chase after the rascal, and we saw no more of him that night.

I relate a simple fact. I am afraid—perhaps, for the poor workmen's sake, I should say I am glad, that it was not an unique one. Villains of this kind, both in April and in June, mixed among the working men, excited their worst passions by bloodthirsty declamations and extravagant promises of success, sold them arms; and then, like the shameless wretch on whose evidence Cuffy and Jones were principally convicted, bore witness against their own victims, unblushingly declaring themselves to have been all along the tools of the Government. I entreat all those who disbelieve this apparently prodigious assertion to read the evidence given on the trial of the John-Street conspirators, and judge for themselves.

. . . . . .

"The petition's filling faster than ever!" said Crossthwaite, as that evening we returned to Mackaye's little back room.

"Dirt's plenty," grumbled the old man, who had settled himself again to his pipe, with his feet on the fender, and his head half way up the chimney.

"Now, or never!" went on Crossthwaite, without minding him; "now, or never! The manufacturing districts seem more firm than ever."

"An' words cheap," commented Mackaye, *sotto voce*.

"Well," I said, "Heaven keep us from the necessity of ulterior measures! But what must be, must."

"The Government expect it, I can tell you. They're in a pitiable funk, I hear. One regiment is ordered to Uxbridge already, because they daren't trust it. They'll find soldiers are men, I do believe, after all."

"Men they are," said Sandy; "an' therefore they'll no be fools eneugh to stan' by an' see ye pu' doon a' that is, to build up ye yourselves dinna yet rightly ken what. Men? Ay, an' wi' mair common sense in them than some that had mair opportunities."

"I think I've settled everything," went on Crossthwaite, who seemed not to have heard the last speech —"settled everything—for poor Katie, I mean. If anything happens to me, she has friends at Cork—she thinks so at least—and they'd get her out to service somewhere—God knows!" And his face worked fearfully a minute.

"Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori!" said I.

"There are twa methods o' fulfilling that saw, I'm thinkin'. Impreemis, to shoot your neebour; in secundis, to hang yoursel."

"What do you mean by grumbling at the whole thing in this way, Mr. Mackaye? Are you, too, going to shrink back from The Cause, now that liberty is at the very doors?"

"Ou, then, I'm stanch eneuch. I ha' laid in my ain stock o' weapons for the fecht at Armageddon."

"You don't mean it? What have you got?"

"A braw new halter, an' a muckle nail. There's a gran' tough beam here ayont the ingle, will haud me a' crouse and cantie, when the time comes."

"What on earth do you mean?" asked we both together.

"Ha' ye looked into the monster-petition?"

"Of course we have, and signed it too!"

"Monster? Ay, ferlie! [Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum. Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne.] Leeberty, the bonnie lassie, wi' a sealgh's fud to her! [I'll no sign it. I dinna consort wi' shoplifters, an' idiots, an' suckin' bairns—wi' long nose, an' short nose, an' pug nose, an' seventeen Deuks o' Wellington, let alone a baker's dizen o' Queens. It's no company, that, for a puir auld patriot!]

"Why, my dear Mackaye," said I, [" you know the Reform Bill petitions were just as bad."

"And the Anti-Corn-law ones, too, for that matter," said Crossthwaite. "You know we can't help accidents; the petition will never be looked through."

"It's always been the plan with Whigs and Tories, too!"

"I ken that better than ye, I guess."

"And isn't everything fair in a good cause?" said Crossthwaite.

("Desperate men really can't be so dainty."

"How lang ha' ye learnit that deil's lee, Johnnie? Ye were no o' that mind five years agone, lad. Ha' ye been to Exeter Hall the while? A's fair in the cause

o' Mammon; in the cause o' cheap bread, that means cheap wages; but in the cause o' God—wae's me, that ever I suld see this day ower again! ower again! Like the dog to his vomit—just as it was ten, twenty, fifty year agone. I'll just ha' a petition a' alane to mysel—I an' a twa or three honest men. Besides, ye're just eight days ower time wi' it."

"What do you mean?"

"Suld ha' sent it in the 1st of April, an' no the 10th; a' fool's day wud ha' suited wi' it ferlie!"

"Mr. Mackaye," said Crossthwaite, in a passion, "I shall certainly inform the Convention of your extraordinary language!"

"Do, laddie! do, then! An' tell 'em this, too"—and, as he rose, his whole face and figure assumed a dignity, an awfulness, which I had never seen before in him—"tell them that ha' driven out * * * and * * *, an' every one that daur speak a word o' common sense, or common humanity—them that stone the prophets, an' quench the Spirit o' God, and love a lie, an' them that mak' the same—them that think to bring about the reign o' love an' britherhood wi' pikes an' vitriol bottles, murther an' blasphemy—tell 'em that ane o' fourscore years and mair—ane that has grown grey in the people's cause—that sat at the feet o' Cartwright, an' knelt by the death-bed o' Rabbie Burns—ane that cheerit Burdett as he went to the Touer, an' spent his wee earnings for Hunt an' Cobbett—ane that beheld the shaking o' the nations in the Ninety-three, and heard the birth-shriek o' a new-born

world—ane that while he was yet a callant saw Liberty afar off, an' seeing her was glad, as for a bonny bride, an' followed her through the wilderness for threescore weary waeful years—sends them the last message that e'er he'll send on airth: tell 'em that they're the slaves o' warse than priests and kings—the slaves o' their ain lusts an' passions—the slaves o' every loud-tongued knave an' mountebank that'll pamper them in their self-conceit; and that the gude God 'll smite 'em doon, and bring 'em to nought, and scatter 'em abroad, till they repent, an' get clean hearts and a richt speerit within them, and learn His lesson that he's been trying to teach 'em this threescore years—that the cause o' the people is the cause o' Him that made the people] an' [~~that tak' the deevil's tools to do his work wi'~~! Gude guide us!—What was yon, Alton, laddie?"

"What?"

"But I saw a spunk o' fire fa' into your bosom! I've na faith in siccan heathen omens; but auld carlins wud say it's a sign o' death within the year—save ye from it, my puir misguidit bairn! Aiblins a fire-flaught o' my een, it might be—I've had them unco often the day——"

And he stooped down to the fire, and began to light his pipe, muttering to himself—

["Saxty years o' madness! saxty years o' madness! How lang, O Lord, before thou bring these puir daft bodies to their richt mind again?"]

We stood watching him, and interchanging looks—expecting something, we knew not what.

Suddenly he sank forward on his knees, with his hands on the bars of the grate; we rushed forward, and caught him up. He turned his eyes up to me, speechless, with a ghastly expression; one side of his face was all drawn aside—and helpless as a child, he let us lift him to his bed, and there he lay staring at the ceiling.

. . . . . .

Four weary days passed by—it was the night of the 9th of April. In the evening of that day his speech returned to him on a sudden—he seemed uneasy about something, and several times asked Katie the day of the month.

"Before the tenth—ay, we maun pray for that. I doubt but I'm ower hearty yet—I canna bide to see the shame o' that day——

. . . . . .

Na—I'll tak no potions nor pills—gin it were na for scruples o' conscience, I'd apocartereeze a'thegither, after the manner o' the ancient philosophers. But it's no lawful, I misdoubt, to starve onesel."

"Here is the doctor," said Katie.

"Doctor? Wha ca'd for doctors? Canst thou administer to a mind diseased? Can ye tak long nose, an' short nose, an' snub nose, an' seventeen Deuks o' Wellington out o' my puddins? Will your castor-oil, an' your calomel, an' your croton, do that? D'ye ken a medicamentum that'll put brains into workmen——? Non tribus Anticyrus! Tons o' hellebore—acres o' strait waistcoats—a hall police-

force o' head doctors, winna do it. Juvat insanire—[this their way is their folly,] as auld Benjamin o' Tudela saith of the heathen. Heigho! 'Forty years lang was he grevit wi' this generation, an' swore in His wrath that they suldna enter into His rest.' Pulse? tongue? ay, shak your lugs, an' tak your fee, an' dinna keep auld folk out o' their graves. Can ye sing?"

The doctor meekly confessed his inability.

"That's pity—or I'd gar ye sing Auld-lang-syne,—

"'We twa hae paidl't i' the burn'—

Aweel, aweel, aweel——"

. . . . .

Weary and solemn was that long night, as we sat there, with the crushing weight of the morrow on our mind, watching by that death-bed, listening hour after hour to the rambling soliloquies of the old man, as "he babbled of green fields;" yet I verily believe that to all of us, especially to poor little Katie, the active present interest of tending him kept us from going all but mad with anxiety and excitement. But it was weary work:—and yet, too, strangely interesting, as at times there came scraps of old Scotch love-poetry, contrasting sadly with the grim withered lips that uttered them—hints to me of some sorrow long since suffered, but never healed. I had never heard him allude to such an event before but once, on the first day of our acquaintance.

"'I went to the kirk,
My luve sat afore me;
I trow my twa een
Tauld him a sweet story.

Aye wakin o'—
Wakin aye and weary—
I thocht a' the kirk
Saw me and my deary.'

"'Aye wakin o'!'—[Do ye think, noo, we sall ha knowledge in the next warld o' them we loved on earth? I askit that same o' Rab Burns ance; an' he said, puir chiel, he 'didna ken ower weel, we maun bide and see;'—bide and see—that's the gran' philosophy o' life, after a'. Aiblins folk 'll ken their true freens there; an' there'll be na mair luve coft and sauld for siller—]

" 'Gear and tocher is needit nane
I' the country whaur my luve is gane.'

. . . . .

Gin I had a true freen the noo! to gang down the wynd, an' find if it war but an auld Abraham o' a blue-gown, wi' a bit crowd, or a fizzle-pipe, to play me the Bush aboon Traquair! Na, na, na; it's singing the Lord's song in a strange land, that wad be; an' I hope the application's no irreverent, for ane that was rearit amang the hills o' God, an' the trees o' the forest which he hath planted.

" 'Oh the broom, and the bonny yellow broom,
The broom o' the Cowden-knowes.'

Hech, but she wud lilt that bonnily!

. . . . .

Did ye ever gang listering saumons by nicht? Ou, but it's braw sport, wi' the scars an' the birks a'

glowering out blude-red i' the torchlight, and the bonnie hizzies skelping an' skirling on the bank——

. . . . .

There was a gran' leddy, a bonny leddy, came in and talked like an angel o' God to puir auld Sandy, anent the salvation o' his soul. But I tauld her no' to fash hersel. It's no' my view o' human life, that a man's sent into the warld just to save his soul, an' creep out again. An' I said I wad leave the savin' o' my soul to Him that made my soul; it was in richt gude keepin' there, I'd warrant. An' then she was unco fleyed when she found I didna haud wi' the Athanasian creed. An' I tauld her, na; if He that died on cross was sic a ane as she and I teuk Him to be, there was na that pride nor spite in Him, be sure, to send a puir auld sinful, guideless body to eternal fire, because he didna a'thegither understand the honour due to His name."

"Who was this lady?"

He did not seem to know; and Katie had never heard of her before—"some district visitor" or other.

. . . . .

"I sair misdoubt but the auld creeds are in the richt anent Him, after a'. I'd gie muckle to think it—there's na comfort as it is. Aiblins there might be a wee comfort in that, for a puir auld worn-out patriot. But it's ower late to change. I tauld her that too ance. It's ower late to put new wine into auld bottles. I was unco drawn to the high doctrines ance, when I was a bit laddie, an' sat in the wee kirk

by my minnie an' my daddie—a richt stern auld Cameronian sort o' body he was, too; but as I grew, and grew, the bed was ower short for a man to stretch himsel thereon, an' the plaidie ower strait for a man to fauld himself therein; and so I had to gang my gate a' naked in the matter o' formulæ, as Maister Tummas has it."

"Ah! do send for a priest, or a clergyman!" said Katie, who partly understood his meaning.

"Parson? He canna pit new skin on auld scars. Na bit stickit curate-laddie for me, to gang argumentin' wi' ane that's auld enough to be his gran'-father. When the parsons will hear me anent God's people, then I'll hear them anent God.

" '——Sae I'm wearing awa, Jean,
To the land o' the leal'—

Gin I ever get thither. Katie, here, hauds wi' purgatory, ye ken! where souls are burnt clean again—like baccy pipes—

" 'When Razor-brigg is ower and past,
Every night and alle;
To Whinny Muir thou comest at last,
And God receive thy sawle.

Gin hosen an' shoon thou gavest nane
Every night and alle;
The whins shall pike thee intil the bane,
And God receive thy sawle.'

Amen. There's mair things aboon, as well as below, than are dreamt o' in our philosophy. At least, where'er I go, I'll meet no long nose, nor short nose, nor snub nose patriots there; nor puir gowks stealing

the deil's tools to do God's wark wi'. Out among the eternities an' the realities—it's no that dreary outlook, after a', to find truth an' fact—naught but truth an' fact—e'en beside the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched!"

"God forbid!" said Katie.

"God do whatsoever shall please Him, Katie—an' that's aye gude like Himsel'. Shall no the Judge of all the earth do right—right—right?"

And murmuring that word of words to himself, over and over, more and more faintly, he turned slowly over, and seemed to slumber——

Some half-hour passed before we tried to stir him. He was dead.

And the candles waned grey, and the great light streamed in through every crack and cranny, and the sun had risen on the Tenth of April. What would be done before the sun had set?

What would be done? [Just what we had the might to do; and therefore, according to the formula on which we were about to act, that mights are rights, just what we had a right to do—nothing. Futility, absurdity, vanity, and vexation of spirit.] I shall make my next a short chapter. It is a day to be forgotten—and forgiven.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TENTH OF APRIL.

AND he was gone at last! Kind women, whom his unknown charities had saved from shame, laid him out duly, and closed his eyes, and bound up that face that never would beam again with genial humour, those lips that would never again speak courage and counsel to the sinful, the oppressed, the forgotten. And there he lay, the old warrior, dead upon his shield; worn out by long years of manful toil in The People's Cause; and, saddest thought of all, by disappointment in those for whom he spent his soul. True, he was aged; no one knew how old. He had said, more than eighty years; but we had shortened his life, and we knew it. He would never see that deliverance for which he had been toiling ever since the days when as a boy he had listened to Tooke and Cartwright, and the patriarchs of the people's freedom. Bitter, bitter were our thoughts, and bitter were our tears, as Crossthwaite and I stood watching that beloved face, now in death refined to a grandeur, to a youthful simplicity and delicacy, which we had never seen on it before—calm and strong—the square

jaws set firm even in death—the lower lip still clenched above the upper, as if in a divine indignation and everlasting protest, even in the grave, against the devourers of the earth. Yes, he was gone—the old lion, worn out with many wounds, dead in his cage. Where could we replace him? There were gallant men amongst us, eloquent, well-read, earnest—men whose names will ring through this land ere long—men who had been taught wisdom, even as he, by the sinfulness, the apathy, the ingratitude, as well as by the sufferings of their fellows. But where should we two find again the learning, the moderation, the long experience, above all, the more than women's tenderness of him whom we had lost? And at that time, too, of all others! Alas! we had despised his counsel: wayward and fierce we would have none of his reproof; and now God has withdrawn him from us; the righteous was taken away from the evil to come. For we knew that evil was coming. We felt all along that we should *not* succeed. But we were desperate; and his death made us more desperate; still at the moment it drew us nearer to each other. Yes—we were rudderless upon a roaring sea, and all before us blank with lurid blinding mist: but still we were together, to live and die; and as we looked into each other's eyes, and clasped each other's hands above the dead man's face, we felt that there was love between us, as of Jonathan and David, passing the love of woman.

Few words passed. Even our passionate artisan-nature, so sensitive and voluble in general, in com-

parison with the cold reserve of the field-labourer and the gentleman, was hushed in silent awe between the thought of the past and the thought of the future. We felt ourselves trembling between two worlds. We felt that to-morrow must decide our destiny—and we felt rightly, though little we guessed what that destiny would be!

But it was time to go. We had to prepare for the meeting. We must be at Kennington Common within three hours at furthest; and Crossthwaite hurried away, leaving Katie and me to watch the dead.

And then came across me the thought of another deathbed—my mother's—How she had lain and lain, while I was far away—And then I wondered whether she had suffered much, or faded away at last in a peaceful sleep, as he had—And then I wondered how her corpse had looked; and pictured it to myself, lying in the little old room day after day, till they screwed the coffin down—before I came!—Cruel! Did she look as calm, as grand in death as he who lay there? And as I watched the old man's features, I seemed to trace in them the strangest likeness to my mother's. The strangest likeness! I could not shake it off. It became intense—miraculous. Was it she, or was it he, who lay there? I shook myself and rose. My loins ached, my limbs were heavy; my brain and eyes swam round. I must be over-fatigued by excitement and sleeplessness. I would go downstairs into the fresh air, and shake it off.

Lady Ellerton tries to prevent Alton from taking part in the Chabert inquiring.

SC. LIV.

As I came down the passage, a woman, dressed in black, was standing at the door, speaking to one of the lodgers. "And he is dead! Oh, if I had but known sooner that he was even ill!"

That voice—that figure—surely, I knew them!—them, at least, there was no mistaking! Or, was it another phantom of my disordered brain? I pushed forward to the door, and as I did so, she turned and our eyes met full. It was she—Lady Ellerton! sad, worn, transformed by widow's weeds, but that face was like no other's still. Why did I drop my eyes and draw back at the first glance like a guilty coward? She beckoned me towards her, went out into the street, and herself began the conversation, from which I shrank, I know not why.

Ham.

"When did he die?"

"Just at sunrise this morning. But how came you here to visit him? Were you the lady who, as he said, came to him a few days since?"

She did not answer my question. "At sunrise this morning?—A fitting time for him to die, before he sees the ruin and disgrace of those for whom he laboured. And you, too, I hear, are taking your share in this projected madness and iniquity?"

AL.

"What right have you," I asked, bristling up at a sudden suspicion that crossed me, "to use such words about me?"

"Recollect," she answered, mildly but firmly, "your conduct, three years ago, at D * * * *."

"What," I said, "was it not proved upon my trial,

that I exerted all my powers, endangered my very life, to prevent outrage in that case?"

"It was proved upon your trial," she replied, in a marked tone; "but we were informed, and alas! from authority only too good, namely, from that of an ear-witness, of the sanguinary and ferocious language which you were not afraid to use at the meeting in London, only two nights before the riot."

I turned white with rage and indignation.

"Tell me," I said—"tell me, if you have any honour, who dared to forge such an atrocious calumny! No! you need not tell me. I see well enough now. He should have told you that I exposed myself that night to insult, not by advocating, but by opposing violence, as I have always done—as I would now, were not I desperate—hopeless of any other path to liberty. And as for this coming struggle, have I not written to my cousin, humiliating as it was to me, to beg him to warn you all from me, lest——"

I could not finish the sentence.

"You wrote? He has warned us, but he never mentioned your name. He spoke of his knowledge as having been picked up by himself at personal risk to his clerical character."

"The risk, I presume, of being known to have actually received a letter from a Chartist; but I wrote—on my honour I wrote—a week ago; and received no word of answer!"

"Is this true?" she asked.

"A man is not likely to deal in useless falsehoods, who knows not whether he shall live to see the set of sun!"

"Then you are implicated in this expected insurrection?"

"I am implicated," I answered, "with the people; what they do I shall do. Those who once called themselves the patrons of the tailor-poet, left the mistaken enthusiast to languish for three years in prison, without a sign, a hint of mercy, pity, remembrance. Society has cast me off; and, in casting me off, it has sent me off to my own people, where I should have stayed from the beginning. Now I am at my post, because I am among my class. If they triumph peacefully, I triumph with them. If they need blood to gain their rights, be it so. Let the blood be upon the head of those who refuse, not those who demand. At least, I shall be with my own people. And if I die, what better thing on earth can happen to me?"

"But the law?" she said.

"Do not talk to me of law! I know it too well in practice to be moved by any theories about it. Laws are no law, but tyranny, when the few make them, in order to oppress the many by them."

"Oh!" she said, in a voice of passionate earnestness, which I had never heard from her before, "stop—for God's sake, stop! You know not what you are saying—what you are doing. Oh! that I had met you before—that I had had more time to speak to poor Mackaye! Oh! wait, wait—there is a deliver-

ance for you! but never in this path—never. And just while I, and nobler far than I, are longing and struggling to find the means of telling you your deliverance, you, in the madness of your haste, are making it impossible!"

There was a wild sincerity in her words—an almost imploring tenderness in her tone.

"So young!" said she; "so young to be lost thus!"

I was intensely moved. I felt, I knew, that she had a message for me. I felt that hers was the only intellect in the world to which I would have submitted mine; and, for one moment, all the angel and all the devil in me wrestled for the mastery. If I could but have trusted her one moment . . . No! all the pride, the spite, the suspicion, the prejudice of years, rolled back upon me. "An aristocrat! and she, too, the one who has kept me from Lillian!" And in my bitterness, not daring to speak the real thought within me, I answered with a flippant sneer—

"Yes, madam! like Cordelia, so young, yet so untender!—Thanks to the mercies of the upper classes!"

Did she turn away in indignation? No, by Heaven! there was nothing upon her face but the intensest yearning pity. If she had spoken again she would have conquered; but before those perfect lips could open, the thought of thoughts flashed across me.

"Tell me one thing! Is my cousin George to be married to ——" and I stopped.

"He is."

melodramatic.

["And yet," I said, "you wish to turn me back from dying on a barricade!" And without waiting for a reply, I hurried down the street in all the fury of despair.]

AL. (Lon.)

. . . . .

I have promised to say little about the Tenth of April, for indeed I have no heart to do so. Every one of Mackaye's predictions came true. [We had arrayed against us, by our own folly, the very physical force to which we had appealed. The dread of general plunder and outrage by the savages of London, the national hatred of that French and Irish interference of which we had boasted, armed against us thousands of special constables, who had in the abstract little or no objection to our political opinions. The practical common sense of England, whatever discontent it might feel with the existing system, refused to let it be hurled rudely down, on the mere chance of building up on its ruins something as yet untried, and even undefined. Above all, the people would not rise.] Whatever sympathy they had with us, they did not care to show it. And then futility after futility exposed itself. The meeting which was to have been counted by hundreds of thousands, numbered hardly its tens of thousands; [and of them a frightful proportion were of those very rascal classes, against whom we ourselves had offered to be sworn in as special constables. O'Connor's courage failed him after all.] He contrived to be called away, at the critical moment, by some problematical superintendent of

Chartist.

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police. Poor Cuffy, the honestest, if not the wisest, speaker there, leapt off the waggon, exclaiming that we were all "humbugged and betrayed;" and the meeting broke up pitiably piecemeal, drenched and cowed, body and soul, by pouring rain on its way home—for the very heavens mercifully helped to quench our folly—while the monster-petition crawled ludicrously away in a hack cab, to be dragged to the floor of the House of Commons amid roars of laughter —"inextinguishable laughter," as of Tennyson's Epicurean Gods—

> "Careless of mankind.
> For they lie beside their nectar, and their bolts are hurled
> Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
> Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world.
> There they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
> Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
> Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, *and praying hands.*
> *But they smile, they find a music, centred in a doleful song,*
> *Steaming up, a lamentation, and an ancient tale of wrong,*
> *Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong,*
> Chanted by an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
> Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
> Storing little yearly dues of wheat, and wine, and oil;
> Till they perish, and they suffer—some, 'tis whispered, down in hell
> Suffer endless anguish!"——

Truly—truly, great poets' words are vaster than the singers themselves suppose!

Alton follows George home to the Clairs house where he sees him counting a billion and is knocked down and thrown into the street.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LOWEST DEEP.

[SULLEN, disappointed, desperate, I strode along the streets that evening, careless whither I went. The People's Cause was lost—the Charter a laughing-stock.] [That the party which monopolises wealth, rank, and, as it is fancied, education and intelligence, should have been driven, degraded, to appeal to brute force for self-defence—that thought gave me a savage joy; but that it should have conquered by that last, lowest resource!—That the few should be still stronger than the many, or the many still too cold-hearted and coward to face the few—that sickened me. I hated the well-born young special constables whom I passed, because they would have fought. I hated the gent and shopkeeper special constables, because they would have run away.] I hated my own party, because they had gone too far—because they had not gone far enough. I hated myself, because I had not produced some marvellous effect—though what that was to have been I could not tell—and hated myself all the more for that ignorance.

[A group of effeminate shopkeepers passed me,

shouting, "God save the Queen!" "Hypocrites!" I cried in my heart—"they mean 'God save our shops!' Liars! They keep up willingly the useful calumny, that their slaves and victims are disloyal as well as miserable!"

I was utterly abased—no, not utterly; for my self-contempt still vented itself—not in forgiveness, but in universal hatred and defiance. Suddenly I perceived my cousin, laughing and jesting with a party of fashionable young specials: I shrank from him; and yet, I know not why, drew as near him as I could, unobserved—near enough to catch the words,

"Upon my honour, Locke, I believe you are a Chartist yourself at heart."

"At least I am no Communist," said he, in a significant tone. "There is one little bit of real property which I have no intention of sharing with my neighbours."

"What, the little beauty somewhere near Cavendish Square?"

"That's my business."

"Whereby you mean that you are on your way to her now? Well, I am invited to the wedding, remember."

He pushed on laughingly, without answering. I followed him fast—"near Cavendish Square!"—the very part of the town where Lillian lived! I had had, as yet, a horror of going near it; but now an intolerable suspicion scourged me forward, and I dogged his steps, hiding behind pillars, and at the

corners of streets, and then running on, till I got sight of him again. He went through Cavendish Square, up Harley Street—was it possible? I gnashed my teeth at the thought. But it must be so. He stopped at the dean's house, knocked, and entered without parley.

In a minute I was breathless on the door-step, and knocked. I had no plan, no object, except the wild wish to see my own despair. I never thought of the chances of being recognised by the servants, or of anything else, except of Lillian by my cousin's side.

The footman came out smiling. "What did I want?"

"I—I—Mr. Locke."

"Well you needn't be in such a hurry!" (with a significant grin). "Mr. Locke's likely to be busy for a few minutes yet, I expect."

Evidently the man did not know me.

"Tell him that—that a person wishes to speak to him on particular business." Though I had no more notion what that business was than the man himself.

"Sit down in the hall."

And I heard the fellow, a moment afterwards, gossiping and laughing with the maids below about the "young couple."

To sit down was impossible; my only thought was —where was Lillian?

Voices in an adjoining room caught my ear. His! yes—and hers too—soft and low. What devil prompted me to turn eavesdropper? to run headlong

into temptation? I was close to the dining-room door, but they were not there—evidently they were in the back room, which, as I knew, opened into it with folding-doors. I—I must confess all.—Noiselessly, with craft like a madman's, I turned the handle, slipped in as stealthily as a cat—the folding-doors were slightly open. I had a view of all that passed within. A horrible fascination seemed to keep my eyes fixed on them, in spite of myself. Honour, shame, despair, bade me turn away, but in vain.

I saw them.—How can I write it? Yet I will.—I saw them sitting together on the sofa. Their arms were round each other. Her head lay upon his breast; he bent over her with an intense gaze, as of a basilisk, I thought; how do I know that it was not the fierceness of his love? Who could have helped loving her?

Suddenly she raised her head, and looked up in his face—her eyes brimming with tenderness, her cheeks burning with mingled delight and modesty—their lips met, and clung together. . . . It seemed a life—an eternity—before they parted again. Then the spell was broken, and I rushed from the room.

Faint, giddy, and blind, I just recollect leaning against the wall of the staircase. He came hastily out, and started as he saw me. My face told all.

"What? Eavesdropping?" he said, in a tone of unutterable scorn. I answered nothing, but looked stupidly and fixedly in his face, while he glared at me with that keen, burning, intolerable eye. I longed

to spring at his throat, but that eye held me as the snake's holds the deer. At last I found words.

"Traitor! everywhere—in everything—tricking me—supplanting me—in my friends—in my love!"

"Your love? Yours?" And the fixed eye still glared upon me. "Listen, cousin Alton! The strong and the weak have been matched for the same prize: and what wonder, if the strong man conquers? Go and ask Lillian how she likes the thought of being a Communist's love!"

As when, in a nightmare, we try by a desperate effort to break the spell, I sprang forward, and struck at him; he put my hand by carelessly, and felled me bleeding to the ground. I recollect hardly anything more, till I found myself thrust into the street by sneering footmen, and heard them call after me "Chartist" and "Communist" as I rushed along the pavement, careless where I went.

I strode and staggered on through street after street, running blindly against passengers, dashing under horses' heads, heedless of warnings and execrations, till I found myself, I know not how, on Waterloo Bridge. I had meant to go there when I left the door. I knew that at least—and now I was there.

I buried myself in a recess of the bridge, and stared around and up and down.

I was alone—deserted even by myself. Mother, sister, friends, love, the idol of my life, were all gone. I could have borne that. But to be shamed, and know that I deserved it; to be deserted by my own

honour, self-respect, strength of will—who can bear that?

I could have borne it, had one thing been left—faith in my own destiny—the inner hope that God had called me to do a work for Him.

"What drives the Frenchman to suicide?" I asked myself, arguing ever even in the face of death and hell—"His faith in nothing but his own lusts and pleasures; and when they are gone, then comes the pan of charcoal—and all is over. What drives the German? His faith in nothing but his own brain. He has fallen down and worshipped that miserable 'Ich' of his, and made that, and not God's will, the centre and root of his philosophy, his poetry, and his self-idolising æsthetics; and when it fails him, then for prussic acid, and nonentity. Those old Romans, too—why, they are the very experimentum crucis of suicide! As long as they fancied that they had a calling to serve the state, they could live on and suffer. But when they found no more work left for them, then they could die—as Porcia died—as Cato—as I ought. What is there left for me to do? outcast, disgraced, useless, decrepit——"

I looked out over the bridge into the desolate night. Below me the dark moaning river-eddies hurried downward. The wild west-wind howled past me, and leapt over the parapet downward. The huge reflection of Saint Paul's, the great tap-roots of light from lamp and window that shone upon the lurid stream, pointed down—down—down. A black

wherry shot through the arch beneath me, still and smoothly downward. [My brain began to whirl madly —I sprang upon the step.] A man rushed past me, clambered on the parapet, and threw up his arms wildly.—A moment more, and he would have leapt into the stream. The sight recalled me to my senses —say, rather, it re-awoke in me the spirit of manhood. I seized him by the arm, tore him down upon the pavement, and held him, in spite of his frantic struggles. It was Jemmy Downes! Gaunt, ragged, sodden, blear-eyed, drivelling, the worn-out gin-drinker stood, his momentary paroxysm of strength gone, trembling and staggering.

"Why won't you let a cove die? Why won't you let a cove die? [They're all dead—drunk and poisoned, and dead! What is there left?"—he burst out suddenly in his old ranting style—"what is there left on earth to live for? The prayers of liberty are answered by the laughter of tyrants; her sun is sunk beneath the ocean wave, and her pipe put out by the raging billows of aristocracy! Those starving millions of Kennington Common—where are they? Where? I axes you," he cried fiercely, raising his voice to a womanish scream—"where are they?"]

"Gone home to bed, like sensible people; and you had better go too."

"Bed! I sold ours a month ago; but we'll go. Come along, and I'll show you my wife and family; and we'll have a tea-party—Jacob's Island tea. Come along!

"Flea, flea, unfortunate flea!
Bereft of his wife and his small family!"

He clutched my arm, and dragging me off towards the Surrey side, turned down Stamford Street.

I followed half perforce; and the man seemed quite demented—whether with gin or sorrow I could not tell. As he strode along the pavement, he kept continually looking back, with a perplexed terrified air, as if expecting some fearful object.

"The rats!—the rats! don't you see 'em coming out of the gullyholes, atween the area railings—dozens and dozens?"

"No; I saw none."

"You lie; I hear their tails whisking; there's their shiny hats a glistening, and every one on 'em with peelers' staves! Quick! quick! or they'll have me to the station-house."

"Nonsense!" I said; "we are free men! What are the policemen to us?"

"You lie!" cried he, with a fearful oath, and a wrench at my arm which almost threw me down. "Do you call a sweater's man a free man?"

"You a sweater's man?"

"Ay!" with another oath. "My men ran away—folks said I drank, too; but here I am; and I, that sweated others, I'm sweated myself—and I'm a slave! I'm a slave—a negro slave, I am, you aristocrat villain!"

"Mind me, Downes; if you will go quietly, I will go with you; but if you do not let go of my

arm, I give you in charge to the first policeman I meet."

"Oh, don't, don't!" whined the miserable wretch, as he almost fell on his knees, gin-drinkers' tears running down his face, "or I shall be too late.—And then the rats 'll get in at the roof, and up through the floor, and eat 'em all up, and my work too—the grand new three-pound coat that I've been stitching at this ten days, for the sum of one half-crown sterling—and don't I wish I may see the money? Come on, quick; there are the rats, close behind!" And he dashed across the broad roaring thoroughfare of Bridge Street, and hurrying almost at a run down Tooley Street, plunged into the wilderness of Bermondsey.

He stopped at the end of a miserable blind alley, where a dirty gas-lamp just served to make darkness visible, and show the patched windows and rickety doorways of the crazy houses, whose upper stories were lost in a brooding cloud of fog; and the pools of stagnant water at our feet; and the huge heap of cinders which filled up the waste end of the alley—a dreary, black, formless mound, on which two or three spectral dogs prowled up and down after the offal, appearing and vanishing like dark imps in and out of the black misty chaos beyond.

The neighbourhood was undergoing, as it seemed, "improvements" of that peculiar metropolitan species which consists in pulling down the dwellings of the poor, and building up rich men's houses instead; and

great buildings, within high temporary palings, had already eaten up half the little houses; as the great fish, and the great estates, and the great shopkeepers, eat up the little ones of their species—by the law of competition, lately discovered to be the true creator and preserver of the universe. There they loomed up, the tall bullies, against the dreary sky, looking down with their grim, proud, stony visages, on the misery which they were driving out of one corner, only to accumulate and intensify it in another.

The house at which we stopped was the last in the row; all its companions had been pulled down; and there it stood, leaning out with one naked ugly side into the gap, and stretching out long props, like feeble arms and crutches, to resist the work of demolition.

A group of slatternly people were in the entry, talking loudly, and as Downes pushed by them, a woman seized him by the arm.

"Oh! you unnatural villain!—To go away after your drink, and leave all them poor dear dead corpses locked up, without even letting a body go in to stretch them out!"

"And breeding the fever, too, to poison the whole house!" growled one.

"The relieving officer's been here, my cove," said another, "and he's gone for a peeler and a search warrant to break open the door, I can tell you!"

But Downes pushed past unheeding, unlocked a door at the end of the passage, thrust me in, locked it again, and then rushed across the room in chase of

two or three rats who vanished into cracks and holes.

And what a room! A low lean-to with wooden walls, without a single article of furniture; and through the broad chinks of the floor shone up as it were ugly glaring eyes, staring at us. They were the reflections of the rushlight in the sewer below. The stench was frightful—the air heavy with pestilence. The first breath I drew made my heart sink and my stomach turn. But I forgot everything in the object which lay before me, as Downes tore a half-finished coat off three corpses laid side by side on the bare floor.

There was his little Irish wife:—dead—and naked; the wasted white limbs gleamed in the lurid light; the unclosed eyes stared, as if reproachfully, at the husband whose drunkenness had brought her there to kill her with the pestilence; and on each side of her a little, shrivelled, impish, child-corpse,—the wretched man had laid their arms round the dead mother's neck—and there they slept, their hungering and wailing over at last for ever; the rats had been busy already with them—but what matter to them now?

"Look!" he cried; "I watched 'em dying! Day after day I saw the devils come up through the cracks, like little maggots and beetles, and all manner of ugly things, creeping down their throats; and I asked 'em, and they said they were the fever devils."

It was too true: the poisonous exhalations had killed them. The wretched man's delirium tremens

had given that horrible substantiality to the poisonous fever gases.

Suddenly Downes turned on me, almost menacingly. "Money! money! I want some gin!"

I was thoroughly terrified—and there was no shame in feeling fear locked up with a madman far my superior in size and strength, in so ghastly a place. But the shame and the folly too would have been in giving way to my fear; and with a boldness half assumed, half the real fruit of excitement and indignation at the horrors I beheld, I answered—

"If I had money, I would give you none. What do you want with gin? Look at the fruits of your accursed tippling. If you had taken my advice, my poor fellow," I went on, gaining courage as I spoke, "and become a water-drinker like me——"

"Curse you and your water-drinking! If you had had no water to drink or wash with for two years but that—that," pointing to the foul ditch below—"if you had emptied the slops in there with one hand, and filled your kettle with the other——"

"Do you actually mean that that sewer is your only drinking water?"

"Where else can we get any? Everybody drinks it; and you shall, too—you shall!" he cried, with a fearful oath, "and then see if you don't run off to the gin-shop, to take the taste of it out of your mouth. Drink? and who can help drinking, with his stomach turned with such hell-broth as that—or such a hell's blast as this air is here, ready to vomit from morning

till night with the smells? I'll show you. You shall drink a bucket full of it, as sure as you live, you shall."

And he ran out of the back door, upon a little balcony, which hung over the ditch.

I tried the door, but the key was gone, and the handle too. I beat furiously on it, and called for help. Two gruff authoritative voices were heard in the passage.

"Let us in; I'm the policeman!"

"Let me out, or mischief will happen!"

The policeman made a vigorous thrust at the crazy door; and just as it burst open, and the light of his lantern streamed into the horrible den, a heavy splash was heard outside.

"He has fallen into the ditch!"

"He'll be drowned, then, as sure as he's a born man," shouted one of the crowd behind.

We rushed out on the balcony. The light of the policeman's lantern glared over the ghastly scene—along the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch—over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping-sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish grave-lights—over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcases of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth—over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred,

hot breaths of miasma—the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death. I almost fancied that I could see the haggard face staring up at me through the slimy water; but no, it was as opaque as stone.

I shuddered and went in again, to see slatternly gin-smelling women stripping off their clothes—true women even there—to cover the poor naked corpses; and pointing to the bruises which told a tale of long tyranny and cruelty; and mingling their lamentations with stories of shrieks and beating, and children locked up for hours to starve; and the men looked on sullenly, as if they too were guilty, or rushed out to relieve themselves by helping to find the drowned body. Ugh! it was the very mouth of hell, that room. And in the midst of all the rout, the relieving officer stood impassive, jotting down scraps of information, and warning us to appear the next day, to state what we knew before the magistrates. Needless hypocrisy of law! Too careless to save the woman and children from brutal tyranny, nakedness, starvation!—Too superstitious to offend its idol of vested interests, by protecting the poor man against his tyrants, the house-owning shopkeepers under whose greed the dwellings of the poor become nests of filth and pestilence, drunkenness and degradation. Careless, superstitious, imbecile law!—leaving the victims to die unhelped, and then, when the fever and the tyranny has done its work, in thy sanctimonious prudishness, drugging thy respectable conscience by a "searching inquiry"

as to how it all happened—lest, forsooth, there should have been "foul play"! Is the knife or the bludgeon, then, the only foul play, and not the cesspool and the curse of Rabshakeh? Go through Bermondsey or Spitalfields, St. Giles's or Lambeth, and see if *there* is not foul play enough already—to be tried hereafter at a more awful coroner's inquest than thou thinkest of!

A's fever (The Dreams)
[apparition of Mrs. Locke]

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DREAMLAND.

AL. It must have been two o'clock in the morning before I reached my lodgings. [Too much exhausted to think, I hurried to my bed. I remember now that I reeled strangely as I went upstairs. I lay down, and was asleep in an instant.

How long I had slept I know not, when I awoke with a strange confusion and whirling in my brain, and an intolerable weight and pain about my back and loins.] By the light of the gas-lamp I saw a figure standing at the foot of my bed. I could not discern the face, but I knew instinctively that it was my [mother.] I called to her again and again, but she did not answer. She moved slowly away, and passed out through the wall of the room.

dream vision.

I tried to follow her, but could not. An enormous, unutterable weight seemed to lie upon me. The bed-clothes grew and grew before me, and upon me, into a vast mountain, millions of miles in height. Then it seemed all glowing red, like the cone of a volcano. I heard the roaring of the fires within, the rattling of

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the cinders down the heaving slope. A river ran from its summit; and up that river-bed it seemed I was doomed to climb and climb for ever, millions and millions of miles upwards, against the rushing stream. The thought was intolerable, and I shrieked aloud. A raging thirst had seized me. I tried to drink the river-water: but it was boiling hot—sulphurous—reeking of putrefaction. Suddenly I fancied that I could pass round the foot of the mountain; and jumbling, as madmen will, the sublime and the ridiculous, I sprang up to go round the foot of my bed, which was the mountain.

I recollect lying on the floor. I recollect the people of the house, who had been awoke by my shriek and my fall, rushing in and calling to me. I could not rise or answer. I recollect a doctor; and talk about brain fever and delirium. It was true. I was in a raging fever. And my fancy, long pent up and crushed by circumstances, burst out in uncontrollable wildness, and swept my other faculties with it helpless away over all heaven and earth, presenting to me, as in a vast kaleidoscope, fantastic symbols of all I had ever thought, or read, or felt.

That fancy of the mountain returned; but I had climbed it now. I was wandering along the lower ridge of the Himalaya. On my right the line of snow peaks showed like a rosy saw against the clear blue morning sky. Raspberries and cyclamens were peeping through the snow around me. As I looked down

the abysses, I could see far below, through the thin veils of blue mist that wandered in the glens, the silver spires of giant deodars, and huge rhododendrons glowing like trees of flame. The longing of my life to behold that cradle of mankind was satisfied. My eyes revelled in vastness, as they swept over the broad flat jungle at the mountain foot, a desolate sheet of dark gigantic grasses, furrowed with the paths of the buffalo and rhinoceros, with barren sandy water-courses, desolate pools, and here and there a single tree, stunted with malaria, shattered by mountain floods; and far beyond, the vast plains of Hindostan, enlaced with myriad silver rivers and canals, tanks and rice-fields, cities with their mosques and minarets, gleaming among the stately palm-groves along the boundless horizon. Above me was a Hindoo temple, cut out of the yellow sandstone. I climbed up to the higher tier of pillars among monstrous shapes of gods and fiends, that mouthed and writhed and mocked at me, struggling to free themselves from their bed of rock. The bull Nundi rose and tried to gore me: hundred-handed gods brandished quoits and sabres round my head; and Kali dropped the skull from her gore-dripping jaws, to clutch me for her prey. Then my mother came, and seizing the pillars of the portico, bent them like reeds: an earthquake shook the hills—great sheets of woodland slid roaring and crashing into the valleys—a tornado swept through the temple halls, which rocked and tossed like a vessel in a storm: a crash—a cloud of yellow

dust which filled the air—choked me—blinded me—buried me—

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And Eleanor came by, and took my soul in the palm of her hand, as the angels did Faust's, and carried it to a cavern by the seaside, and dropped it in; and I fell and fell for ages. And all the velvet mosses, rock flowers, and sparkling spars and ores, fell with me, round me, in showers of diamonds, whirlwinds of emerald and ruby, and pattered into the sea that moaned below, and were quenched; and the light lessened above me to one small spark, and vanished; and I was in darkness, and turned again to my dust.

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And I was at the lowest point of created life: a [redacted] moted to the rock, fathoms below the tide-mark; and, worst of all, my individuality was gone. I was not one thing, but many things—a crowd of innumerable polypi; and I grew and grew, and the more I grew the more I divided, and multiplied thousand and ten thousandfold. If I could have thought, I should have gone mad at it; but I could only feel.

And I heard Eleanor and Lillian talking, as they floated past me through the deep, for they were two angels; and Lillian said, "When will he be one again?"

And Eleanor said, "He who falls from the golden ladder must climb through ages to its top. He who

tears himself in pieces by his lusts, ages only can make him one again. The madrepore shall become a shell, and the shell a fish, and the fish a bird, and the bird a beast; and then he shall become a man again, and see the glory of the latter days."

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And I was a soft crab, under a stone on the sea-shore. With infinite starvation, and struggling, and kicking, I had got rid of my armour, shield by shield, and joint by joint, and cowered, naked and pitiable, in the dark, among dead shells and ooze. Suddenly the stone was turned up; and there was my cousin's hated face laughing at me, and pointing me out to Lillian. She laughed too as I looked up, sneaking, ashamed, and defenceless, and squared up at him with my soft useless claws. Why should she not laugh? Are not crabs, and toads, and monkeys, and a hundred other strange forms of animal life, jests of nature—embodiments of a divine humour, at which men are meant to laugh and be merry? But, alas! my cousin, as he turned away, thrust the stone back with his foot, and squelched me flat.

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And I was a [redacted], weak and helpless, till I could attach myself to some living thing; and then I had power to stop the largest ship. And Lillian was a flying fish, and skimmed over the crests of the waves on gauzy wings. And my cousin was a huge shark, rushing after her, greedy and open-mouthed; and I

saw her danger, and clung to him, and held him back; and just as I had stopped him, she turned and swam back into his open jaws.]

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Sand—sand—nothing but sand! The air was full of sand drifting over granite temples, and painted kings and triumphs, and the skulls of a former world; and I was an ostrich, flying madly before the simoom wind, and the giant sand pillars, which stalked across the plains, hunting me down. [And Lillian was an Amazon queen, beautiful and cold and cruel; and she rode upon a charmed horse, and carried behind her on her saddle a spotted ounce, which was my cousin; and, when I came near her, she made him leap down and course me. And we ran for miles and for days through the interminable sand, till he sprang on me, and dragged me down. And as I lay quivering and dying, she reined in her horse above me, and looked down at me with beautiful, pitiless eyes; and a wild Arab tore the plumes from my wings, and she took them and wreathed them in her golden hair. The broad and blood-red sun sank down beneath the sand, and the horse and the Amazon and the ostrich plumes shone blood-red in his lurid rays.]

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I was a [redacted] among South American forests—a vast sleepy mass, my elephantine limbs and yard-long talons contrasting strangely with the little meek

rabbit's head, furnished with a poor dozen of clumsy grinders, and a very small kernel of brains, whose highest consciousness was the enjoyment of muscular strength. [Where I had picked up the sensation which my dreams realised for me I know not; my waking life, alas! had never given me experience of it. Has the mind power of creating sensations for itself? Surely it does so, in those delicious dreams about flying which haunt us poor wingless mortals, which would seem to give my namesake's philosophy the lie.] However that may be, intense and new was the animal delight, to plant my hinder claws at some tree-foot deep into the black rotting vegetable-mould which steamed rich gases up wherever it was pierced, and clasp my huge arms round the stem of some palm or tree-fern; and then slowly bring my enormous weight and muscle to bear upon it, till the stem bent like a withe, and the laced bark cracked, and the fibres groaned and shrieked, and the roots sprang up out of the soil; and then, with a slow circular wrench, the whole tree was twisted bodily out of the ground, and the maddening tension of my muscles suddenly relaxed, and I sank sleepily down upon the turf, to browse upon the crisp tart foliage, and fall asleep in the glare of sunshine which streamed through the new gap in the green forest roof. Much as I had envied the strong, I had never before suspected the delight of mere physical exertion. I now understood the wild gambols of the dog, and the madness which makes the horse gallop and strain onwards till he

drops and dies. They fulfil their nature, as I was doing, and in that is always happiness.

But I did more—whether from mere animal destructiveness, or from the spark of humanity which was slowly rekindling in me, I began to delight in tearing up trees for its own sake. I tried my strength daily on thicker and thicker boles. I crawled up to the high palm-tops, and bowed them down by my weight. My path through the forest was marked, like that of a tornado, by snapped and prostrate stems and withering branches. Had I been a few degrees more human, I might have expected a retribution for my sin. I had fractured my own skull three or four times already. I used often to pass the carcases of my race, killed, as geologists now find them, by the fall of the trees they had overthrown; but still I went on, more and more reckless, a slave, like many a so-called man, to the mere sense of power.

One day I wandered to the margin of the woods, and climbing a tree, surveyed a prospect new to me. For miles and miles, away to the white line of the smoking Cordillera, stretched a low rolling plain; one vast thistle-bed, the down of which flew in grey gauzy clouds before a soft fitful breeze; innumerable finches fluttered and pecked above it, and bent the countless flower-heads. Far away, one tall tree rose above the level thistle-ocean. A strange longing seized me to go and tear it down. The forest leaves seemed tasteless; my stomach sickened at them; nothing but that tree would satisfy me; and descending, I slowly

brushed my way, with half-shut eyes, through the tall thistles which buried even my bulk.

At last, after days of painful crawling, I dragged my unwieldiness to the tree-foot. Around it the plain was bare, and scored by burrows and heaps of earth, among which gold, some in dust, some in great knots and ingots, sparkled everywhere in the sun, in fearful contrast to the skulls and bones which lay bleaching round. Some were human, some were those of vast and monstrous beasts. I knew (one knows everything in dreams) that they had been slain by the winged ants, as large as panthers, who snuffed and watched around over the magic treasure. Of them I felt no fear; and they seemed not to perceive me, as I crawled, with greedy, hunger-sharpened eyes, up to the foot of the tree. It seemed miles in height. Its stem was bare and polished like a palm's, and above a vast feathery crown of dark green velvet slept in the still sunlight. But wonders of wonders! from among the branches hung great sea-green lilies, and, nestled in the heart of each of them, the bust of a beautiful girl. Their white bosoms and shoulders gleamed rosy-white against the emerald petals, like conch-shells half-hidden among sea-weeds, while their delicate waists melted mysteriously into the central sanctuary of the flower. Their long arms and golden tresses waved languishingly downward in the breeze; their eyes glittered like diamonds; their breaths perfumed the air. A blind ecstasy seized me—I awoke again to humanity, and fiercely clasping the tree, shook and

tore at it, in the blind hope of bringing nearer to me the magic beauties above: for I knew that I was in the famous land of Wak-Wak, from which the Eastern merchants used to pluck those flower-born beauties, and bring them home to fill the harems of the Indian kings. Suddenly I heard a rustling in the thistles behind me, and looking round saw again that dreaded face—my cousin!

He was dressed—strange jumble that dreams are!—like an American backwoodsman. He carried the same revolver and bowie-knife which he had showed me the fatal night that he intruded on the Chartist club. I shook with terror; but he, too, did not see me. He threw himself on his knees, and began fiercely digging and scraping for the gold.

The winged ants rushed on him, but he looked up, and "held them with his glittering eye," and they shrank back abashed into the thistle covert; while I strained and tugged on, and the faces of the dryads above grew sadder and older, and their tears fell on me like a fragrant rain.

Suddenly the tree-bole cracked—it was tottering. I looked round, and saw that my cousin knelt directly in the path of its fall. I tried to call to him to move; but how could a poor [illegible] like myself articulate a word? I tried to catch his attention by signs—he would not see. I tried, convulsively, to hold the tree up, but it was too late; a sudden gust of air swept by, and down it rushed, with a roar like a whirlwind, and leaving my cousin untouched, struck me full across

the loins, broke my backbone, and pinned me to the ground in mortal agony. I heard one wild shriek rise from the flower fairies, as they fell each from the lily cup, no longer of full human size, but withered, shrivelled, diminished a thousandfold, and lay on the bare sand, like little rosy humming-birds' eggs, all crushed and dead.

The great blue heaven above me spoke, and cried, "Selfish and sense-bound! thou hast murdered beauty!"

The sighing thistle-ocean answered, and murmured, "Discontented! thou hast murdered beauty!"

One flower fairy alone lifted up her tiny cheek from the gold-strewn sand, and cried, "Presumptuous! thou hast murdered beauty!"

It was Lillian's face—Lillian's voice! My cousin heard it too, and turned eagerly; and as my eyes closed in the last death-shiver, I saw him coolly pick up the little beautiful figure, which looked like a fragment of some exquisite cameo, and deliberately put it away in his cigar-case, as he said to himself, "A charming tit-bit for me, when I return from the diggings!"

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When I awoke again, I was a baby-ape in Borneon forests, perched among fragrant trailers and fantastic orchis flowers; and as I looked down, beneath the green roof, into the clear waters paved with unknown water-lilies on which the sun had never shone, I saw

my face reflected in the pool—a melancholy, thoughtful countenance, with large projecting brow—it might have been a negro child's. And I felt stirring in me germs of a new and higher consciousness—yearnings of love towards the mother ape, who fed me and carried me from tree to tree. But I grew and grew; and then the weight of my destiny fell upon me. I saw year by year my brow recede, my neck enlarge, my jaw protrude; my teeth became tusks; skinny wattles grew from my cheeks—the animal faculties in me were swallowing up the intellectual. I watched in myself, with stupid self-disgust, the fearful degradation which goes on from youth to age in all the monkey race, especially in those which approach nearest to the human form. Long melancholy mopings, fruitless strugglings to think, were periodically succeeded by wild frenzies, agonies of lust and aimless ferocity. I flew upon my brother apes, and was driven off with wounds. I rushed howling down into the village gardens, destroying everything I met. I caught the birds and insects, and tore them to pieces with savage glee. One day, as I sat among the boughs, I saw Lillian coming along a flowery path—decked as Eve might have been, the day she turned from Paradise. The skins of gorgeous birds were round her waist; her hair was wreathed with fragrant tropic flowers. On her bosom lay a baby—it was my cousin's. I knew her, and hated her. The madness came upon me. I longed to leap from the bough and tear her limb from limb; but brutal terror, the dread of man

which is the doom of beasts, kept me rooted to my place. Then my cousin came—a hunter missionary; and I heard him talk to her with pride of the new world of civilisation and Christianity which he was organising in that tropic wilderness. I listened with a dim jealous understanding—not of the words, but of the facts. I saw them instinctively, as in a dream. She pointed up to me in terror and disgust, as I sat gnashing and gibbering overhead. He threw up the muzzle of his rifle carelessly, and fired—I fell dead, but conscious still. I knew that my carcase was carried to the settlement; and I watched while a smirking, chuckling surgeon dissected me, bone by bone, and nerve by nerve. And as he was fingering at my heart, and discoursing sneeringly about Van Helmont's dreams of the Archæus, and the animal spirit which dwells within the solar plexus, Eleanor glided by again, like an angel, and drew my soul out of the knot of nerves, with one velvet finger-tip.

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Child-dreams—more vague and fragmentary than my animal ones; and yet more calm and simple, and gradually, as they led me onward through a new life, ripening into detail, coherence, and reflection. Dreams of a hut among the valleys of Thibet—the young of forest animals, wild cats, and dogs, and fowls, brought home to be my playmates, and grow up tame around me. Snow-peaks which glittered white against the nightly sky, barring in the horizon of the narrow

valley, and yet seeming to beckon upwards, outwards. Strange unspoken aspirations; [instincts which pointed to unfulfilled powers, a mighty destiny.] A sense, awful and yet cheering, of a wonder and a majesty, a presence and a voice around, in the cliffs and the pine forests, and the great blue rainless heaven. The music of loving voices, the sacred names of child and father, mother, brother, sister, first of all inspirations.—Had we not an All-Father, whose eyes looked down upon us from among those stars above; whose hand upheld the mountain roots below us? Did He not love us, too, even as we loved each other?

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[The noise of wheels crushing slowly through meadows of tall marigolds and asters, orchises and fragrant lilies. I lay, a child, upon a woman's bosom. Was she my mother, or Eleanor, or Lillian? Or was she neither, and yet all—some ideal of the great Arian tribe, containing in herself all future types of European women?] So I slept and woke, and slept again, day after day, week after week, in the lazy bullock-waggon, among herds of grey cattle, guarded by huge lop-eared mastiffs; among shaggy white horses, heavy-horned sheep, and silky goats; among tall, bare-limbed men, with stone axes on their shoulders, and horn bows at their backs. Westward, through the boundless steppes, whither or why we knew not; but that the All-Father had sent us forth. And behind us the rosy snow-peaks died into ghastly grey, lower and lower as every evening came; and before us the plains spread

infinite, with gleaming salt-lakes, and ever fresh tribes of gaudy flowers. Behind us dark lines of living beings streamed down the mountain slopes; around us dark lines crawled along the plains—all westward, westward ever.—The tribes of the Holy Mountain poured out like water to replenish the earth and subdue it—lava-streams from the crater of that great soul-volcano—Titan babies, dumb angels of God, bearing with them in their unconscious pregnancy the law, the freedom, the science, the poetry, the Christianity of Europe and the world.

Westward ever—who could stand against us? We met the wild asses on the steppe, and tamed them, and made them our slaves. We slew the bison herds, and swam broad rivers on their skins. The Python snake lay across our path; the wolves and the wild dogs snarled at us out of their coverts; we slew them and went on. The forest rose in black tangled barriers; we hewed our way through them and went on. Strange giant tribes met us, and eagle-visaged hordes fierce and foolish; we smote them hip and thigh, and went on, westward ever. Days and weeks and months rolled on, and our wheels rolled on with them. New alps rose up before us; we climbed and climbed them, till, in lonely glens, the mountain walls stood up, and barred our path.

Then one arose and said, "Rocks are strong, but the All-Father is stronger. Let us pray to Him to send the earthquakes, and blast the mountains asunder."

So we sat down and prayed, but the earthquake did not come.

Then another arose and said, "Rocks are strong, but the All-Father is stronger. If we are the children of the All-Father, we, too, are stronger than the rocks. Let us portion out the valley, to every man an equal plot of ground; and bring out the sacred seeds, and sow, and build, and come up with me and bore the mountain."

And all said, "It is the voice of God. We will go up with thee, and bore the mountain; and thou shalt be our king, for thou art wisest, and the spirit of the All-Father is on thee; and whosoever will not go up with thee shall die as a coward and an idler."

So we went up; and in the morning we bored the mountain, and at night we came down and tilled the ground, and sowed wheat and barley, and planted orchards. [And in the upper glens we met the mining dwarfs, and saw their tools of iron and copper, and their rock-houses and forges, and envied them.] But they would give us none of them: then our king said—

"The All-Father has given all things and all wisdom. Woe to him who keeps them to himself: we will teach you to sow the sacred seeds; and do you teach us your smith-work, or you die."

Then the dwarfs taught us smith-work; and we loved them, for they were wise; and they married our sons and daughters; and we went on boring the mountain.

Then some of us arose and said, "We are stronger than our brethren, and can till more ground than they. Give us a greater portion of land, to each according to his power."

But the king said, "Wherefore? that ye may eat and drink more than your brethren? Have you larger stomachs, as well as stronger arms? As much as a man needs for himself, that he may do for himself. The rest is the gift of the All-Father, and we must do His work therewith. For the sake of the women and the children, for the sake of the sick and the aged, let him that is stronger go up and work the harder at the mountain." And all men said, "It is well spoken."

So we were all equal—for none took more than he needed; and we were all free, because we loved to obey the king by whom the spirit spoke; and we were all brothers, because we had one work, and one hope, and one All-Father.

But I grew up to be a man; and twenty years were past, and the mountain was not bored through; and the king grew old, and men began to love their flocks and herds better than quarrying, and they gave up boring through the mountain. And the strong and the cunning said, "What can we do with all this might of ours?" So, because they had no other way of employing it, they turned it against each other, and swallowed up the heritage of the weak: and a few grew rich, and many poor; and the valley was filled with sorrow, for the land became too narrow for them.

Then I arose and said, "How is this?" And they said, "We must make provision for our children."

And I answered, ["The All-Father meant neither you nor your children to devour your brethren.] Why do you not break up more waste ground? Why do you not try to grow more corn in your fields?"

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And they answered, "We till the ground as our forefathers did; we will keep to the old traditions."

And I answered, "Oh ye hypocrites! have ye not forgotten the old traditions, that each man should have his equal share of ground, and that we should go on working at the mountain, for the sake of the weak and the children, the fatherless and the widow?"

And they answered nought for a while.

Then one said, "Are we not better off as we are? We buy the poor man's ground for a price, and we pay him his wages for tilling it for us—and we know better how to manage it than he."

And I said, "Oh ye hypocrites! See how your lie works! [Those who were free are now slaves.] Those who had peace of mind are now anxious from day to day for their daily bread. And the multitude gets poorer and poorer, while ye grow fatter and fatter. If ye had gone on boring the mountain, ye would have had no time to eat up your brethren."]

Then they laughed and said, "Thou art a singer of songs, and a dreamer of dreams. Let those who want to get through the mountain go up and bore it; we are well enough here. Come now, sing us pleasant songs, and talk no more foolish dreams, and we will reward thee."

Then they brought out a veiled maiden, and said, "Look! her feet are like ivory, and her hair like threads of gold; and she is the sweetest singer in the whole valley. [And she shall be thine, if thou wilt be like other people, and prophesy smooth things unto us, and torment us no more with talk about liberty, equality, and brotherhood: for they never were, and never will be, on this earth. Living is too hard work to give in to such fancies."]

And when the maiden's veil was lifted, it was Lillian. And she clasped me round the neck, and cried, "Come! I will be your bride, and you shall be rich and powerful; and all men shall speak well of you, and you shall write songs, and we will sing them together, and feast and play from dawn to dawn."

And I wept; and turned me about, and cried, "Wife and child, song and wealth, are pleasant; but blessed is the work which the All-Father has given the people to do. [Let the maimed and the halt and the blind, the needy and the fatherless, come up after me, and we will bore the mountain."]

But the rich drove me out, and drove back those who would have followed me. So I went up by myself, and bored the mountain seven years, weeping; and every year Lillian came to me, and said, "Come, and be my husband, for my beauty is fading, and youth passes fast away." But I set my heart steadfastly to the work.

[And when seven years were over, the poor were so multiplied, that the rich had not wherewith to pay

their labour. And there came a famine in the land, and many of the poor died. Then the rich said, "If we let these men starve, they will turn on us, and kill us, for hunger has no conscience, and they are all but like the beasts that perish." So they all brought, one a bullock, another a sack of meal, each according to his substance, and fed the poor therewith; and said to them, "Behold our love and mercy towards you!" But the more they gave, the less they had wherewithal to pay their labourers; and the more they gave, the less the poor liked to work; so that at last they had not wherewithal to pay for tilling the ground, and each man had to go and till his own, and knew not how; so the land lay waste, and there was great perplexity.

Then I went down to them and said, "If you had hearkened to me, and not robbed your brethren of their land, you would never have come into this strait; for by this time the mountain would have been bored through."

Then they cursed the mountain, and me, and Him who made them, and came down to my cottage at night, and cried, "One-sided and left-handed! father of confusion, and disciple of dead donkeys, see to what thou hast brought the land, with thy blasphemous doctrines! Here we are starving, and not only we, but the poor misguided victims of thy abominable notions!"

"You have become wondrous pitiful to the poor," said I, "since you found that they would not starve that you might wanton."

Then once more Lillian came to me, thin and pale, and worn. "See, I, too, am starving! and you have been the cause of it; but I will forgive all if you will help us but this once."

"How shall I help you?"

"You are a poet and an orator, and win over all hearts with your talk and your songs. Go down to the tribes of the plain, and persuade them to send us up warriors, that we may put down these riotous and idle wretches; and you shall be king of all the land, and I will be your slave, by day and night."

The Chartists.

But I went out, and quarried steadfastly at the mountain.

And when I came back the next evening, the poor had risen against the rich, one and all, crying, "As you have done to us, so will we do to you;" and they

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hunted them down like wild beasts, and slew many of them, and threw their carcases on the dunghill, and took possession of their land and houses, and cried, "We will be all free and equal as our forefathers were, and live here, and eat and drink, and take our pleasure."

Then I ran out, and cried to them, "Fools! will you do as these rich did, and neglect the work of God? If you do to them as they have done to you, you will sin as they sinned, and devour each other at the last, as they devoured you. The old paths are best. Let each man, rich or poor, have his equal share of the land, as it was at first, and go up and dig through the mountain, and possess the good land beyond, where

no man need jostle his neighbour, or rob him, when the land becomes too small for you. Were the rich only in fault? Did not you, too, neglect the work which the All-Father had given you, and run every man after his own comfort? So you entered into a lie, and by your own sin raised up the rich man to be your punishment. For the last time, who will go up with me to the mountain?"

Then they all cried with one voice, "We have sinned! We will go up and pierce the mountain, and fulfil the work which God set to our forefathers."

We went up, and the first stroke that I struck a crag fell out; and behold, the light of day! and far below us the good land and large, stretching away boundless towards the western sun.

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I sat by the cave's mouth at the dawning of the day. Past me the tribe poured down, young and old, with their waggons, and their cattle, their seeds, and their arms, as of old—yet not as of old—wiser and stronger, taught by long labour and sore affliction. Downward they streamed from the cave's mouth into the glens, following the guidance of the silver water-courses; and as they passed me, each kissed my hands and feet, and cried, "Thou hast saved us—thou hast given up all for us. Come and be our king!"

"Nay," I said, "I have been your king this many a year; for I have been the servant of you all."

I went down with them into the plain, and called

them round me. Many times they besought me to go with them and lead them.

"No," I said, "I am old and grey-headed, and I am not as I have been. Choose out the wisest and most righteous among you, and let him lead you. But bind him to yourselves with an oath, that whenever he shall say to you, 'Stay here, and let us sit down and build, and dwell here for ever,' you shall cast him out of his office, and make him a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, and choose one who will lead you forwards in the spirit of God."

The crowd opened, and a woman came forward into the circle. Her face was veiled, but we all knew her for a prophetess. Slowly she stepped into the midst, chanting a mystic song. Whether it spoke of past, present, or future, we knew not; but it sank deep into all our hearts.

"True freedom stands in meekness—
True strength in utter weakness—
Justice in forgiveness lies—
Riches in self-sacrifice—
Own no rank but God's own spirit—
Wisdom rule!—and worth inherit!
Work for all, and all employ—
Share with all, and all enjoy—
God alike to all has given,
Heaven as Earth, and Earth as Heaven,
When the land shall find her king again,
And the reign of God is come."

We all listened, awe-struck. She turned to us and continued:

"Hearken to me, children of Japhet, the unresting!

"On the holy mountain of Paradise, in the Asgard of the Hindoo-Koh, in the cup of the four rivers, in the womb of the mother of nations, in brotherhood, equality, and freedom, the sons of men were begotten, at the wedding of the heaven and the earth. Mighty infants, you did the right you knew not of, and sinned not, because there was no temptation. By selfishness you fell, and became beasts of prey. Each man coveted the universe for his own lusts, and not that he might fulfil in it God's command to people and subdue it. Long have you wandered—and long will you wander still. For here you have no abiding city. You shall build cities, and they shall crumble; you shall invent forms of society and religion, and they shall fail in the hour of need. You shall call the lands by your own names, and fresh waves of men shall sweep you forth, westward, westward ever, till you have travelled round the path of the sun, to the place from whence you came. For out of Paradise you went, and unto Paradise you shall return; you shall become once more as little children, and renew your youth like the eagle's. Feature by feature, and limb by limb, ye shall renew it; age after age, gradually and painfully, by hunger and pestilence, by superstitions and tyrannies, by need and blank despair, shall you be driven back to the All-Father's home, till you become as you were before you fell, and left the likeness of your father for the likeness of the beasts. Out of Paradise you came, from liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and unto them you shall return again."

You went forth in unconscious infancy—you shall return in thoughtful manhood. You went forth in ignorance and need—you shall return in science and wealth, philosophy and art. You went forth with the world a wilderness before you—you shall return when it is a garden behind you. [You went forth selfish savages—you shall return as the brothers of the Son of God.]

"And for you," she said, looking on me, "your penance is accomplished. You have learned what it is to be a man. You have lost your life and saved it. He that gives up house, or land, or wife, or child, for God's sake, it shall be repaid him an hundred-fold. Awake!"

Surely I knew that voice. She lifted her veil. The face was Lillian's? No!—Eleanor's!

Gently she touched my hand—I sank down into soft, weary happy sleep.

The spell was snapped. My fever and my dreams faded away together, and I woke to the twittering of the sparrows, and the scent of the poplar leaves, and the sights and sounds of childhood, and found Eleanor and her uncle sitting by my bed, and with them Crossthwaite's little wife.

I would have spoken, but Eleanor laid her finger on her lips, and taking her uncle's arm, glided from the room. Katie kept stubbornly a smiling silence, and I was fain to obey my new-found guardian angels.

What need of many words? Slowly, and with relapses into insensibility, I passed, like one who re-

covers from drowning, through the painful gate of birth into another life. [The fury of passion had been replaced by a delicious weakness. The thunder-clouds had passed roaring down the wind, and the calm bright holy evening was come. My heart, like a fretful child, had stamped and wept itself to sleep. I was past even gratitude; infinite submission and humility, feelings too long forgotten, absorbed my whole being.] Only I never dared meet Eleanor's eye. Her voice was like an angel's when she spoke to me—friend, mother, sister, all in one. But I had a dim recollection of being unjust to her—of some bar between us.

Katie and Crossthwaite, as they sat by me, tender and careful nurses both, told me, in time, that to Eleanor I owed all my comforts. I could not thank her—the debt was infinite, inexplicable. I felt as if I must speak all my heart or none; and I watched her lavish kindness with a sort of sleepy, passive wonder, like a new-born babe.

At last, one day, my kind nurses allowed me to speak a little. I broached to Crossthwaite the subject which filled my thoughts. "How came I here? How came you here? and Lady Ellerton? What is the meaning of it all?"

"The meaning is, that Lady Ellerton, as they call her, is an angel out of heaven. [Ah, Alton! she was your true friend, after all, if you had but known it, and not that other one at all."]

I turned my head away.

"Whisht—howld then, Johnny darlint! and don't

go tormenting the poor dear sowl, just when he's comin' round again."

"No, no! tell me all. I must—I ought—I deserve to bear it. How did she come here?"

"Why then, it's my belief, she had her eye on you ever since you came out of that Bastille, and before that, too; and she found you out at Mackaye's, and me with you, for I was there looking after you. If it hadn't been for your illness, I'd have been in Texas now, with our friends, for all's up with the Charter, and the country's too hot, at least for me. I'm sick of the whole thing together, patriots, aristocrats, and everybody else, except this blessed angel. And I've got a couple of hundred to emigrate with; and what's more, so have you."

"How's that?"

"Why, when poor dear old Mackaye's will was read, and you raving mad in the next room, he had left all his stock-in-trade, that was, the books, to some of our friends, to form a workmen's library with, and £400 he'd saved, to be parted between you and me, on condition that we'd G. T. T., and cool down across the Atlantic, for seven years come the tenth of April."

So, then, by the lasting love of my adopted father, I was at present at least out of the reach of want! My heart was ready to overflow at my eyes; but I could not rest till I had heard more of Lady Ellerton. What brought her here, to nurse me as if she had been a sister?

"Why, then, she lives not far off by. When her husband died, his cousin got the estate and title, and so she came, Katie tells me, and lived for one year down somewhere in the East-end among the needle-women; and spent her whole fortune on the poor, and never kept a servant, so they say, but made her own bed and cooked her own dinner, and got her bread with her own needle, to see what it was really like. And she learnt a lesson there, I can tell you, and God bless her for it. For now she's got a large house here by, with fifty or more in it, all at work together, sharing the earnings among themselves, and putting into their own pockets the profits which would have gone to their tyrants; and she keeps the accounts for them, and gets the goods sold, and manages everything, and reads to them while they work, and teaches them every day."

"And takes her victuals with them," said Katie, "share and share alike. She that was so grand a lady, to demane herself to the poor unfortunate young things! She's as blessed a saint as any a one in the Calendar, if they'll forgive me for saying so."

"Ay! demeaning, indeed! for the best of it is, they're not the respectable ones only, though she spends hundreds on them——"

"And sure, haven't I seen it with my own eyes, when I've been there charing?"

"Ay, but those she lives with are the fallen and the lost ones—those that the rich would not set up in business, or help them to emigrate, or lift them out

of the gutter with a pair of tongs, for fear they should stain their own whitewash in handling them."

["And sure they're as dacent as meself now, the poor darlints! It was misery druv 'em to it, every one; perhaps it might hav' druv me the same way, if I'd a lot o' childer, and Johnny gone to glory—and the blessed saints save him from that same at all at all!"]

"What! from going to glory?" said John.

"Och, thin, and wouldn't I just go mad if ever such ill luck happened to yees as to be taken to heaven in the prime of your days, asthore?"

And she began sobbing and hugging and kissing the little man; and then suddenly recollecting herself, scolded him heartily for making such a "whillybaloo," and thrust him out of my room, to recommence kissing him in the next, leaving me to many meditations.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE TRUE DEMAGOGUE.

I USED to try to arrange my thoughts, but could not; the past seemed swept away and buried, like the wreck of some drowned land after a flood. Ploughed by affliction to the core, my heart lay fallow for every seed that fell. Eleanor understood me, and gently and gradually, beneath her skilful hand, the chaos began again to bloom with verdure. She and Crossthwaite used to sit and read to me—from the Bible, from poets, from every book which could suggest soothing, graceful, or hopeful fancies. Now out of the stillness of the darkened chamber, one or two priceless sentences of à Kempis or a spirit-stirring Hebrew psalm, would fall upon my ear: and then there was silence again; and I was left to brood over the words in vacancy, till they became a fibre of my own soul's core. Again and again the stories of Lazarus and the Magdalene alternated with Milton's Penseroso, or with Wordsworth's tenderest and most solemn strains. Exquisite prints from the history of our Lord's life and death were hung one by one, each for a few days, opposite my bed, where they might

catch my eye the moment that I woke, the moment before I fell asleep. I heard one day the good dean remonstrating with her on the "sentimentalism" of her mode of treatment.

"Poor drowned butterfly!" she answered, smiling, "he must be fed with honey-dew. Have I not surely had practice enough already?"

"Yes, angel that you are!" answered the old man. "You have indeed had practice enough!" And lifting her hand reverentially to his lips, he turned and left the room.

She sat down by me as I lay, and began to read from Tennyson's Lotus-Eaters. But it was not reading—it was rather a soft dreamy chant, which rose and fell like the waves of sound on an Æolian harp.

"There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentler on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone?
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,

And cease from wanderings;
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm,
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?"

She paused—

My soul was an enchanted boat
Which, like a sleeping swan, did float
Upon the silver waves of her sweet singing.

Half-unconscious, I looked up. Before me hung a copy of Raffaelle's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. As my eye wandered over it, it seemed to blend into harmony with the feelings which the poem had stirred. I seemed to float upon the glassy lake. I watched the vista of the waters and mountains, receding into the dreamy infinite of the still summer sky. Softly from distant shores came the hum of eager multitudes; towers and palaces slept quietly beneath the eastern sun. In front, fantastic fishes, and the birds of the mountain and the lake, confessed His power, who sat there in His calm godlike beauty, His eye ranging over all that still infinity of His own works, over all that wondrous line of figures, which seemed to express every gradation of spiritual consciousness, from the dark self-condemned dislike of Judas's averted and wily face, through mere animal greediness to the first dawnings of surprise, and on to the manly awe and gratitude of Andrew's majestic figure, and the self-abhorrent humility of Peter, as he shrank down into the bottom of the skiff, and with convulsive palms and bursting brow seemed to press out from his

inmost heart the words, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Truly, pictures are the books of the unlearned, and of the mis-learned too. Glorious Raffaelle! Shakspeare of the South! Mighty preacher, to whose blessed intuition it was given to know all human hearts, to embody in form and colour all spiritual truths, common alike to Protestant and Papist, to workman and to sage—oh that I may meet thee before the throne of God, if it be but to thank thee for that one picture, in which thou didst reveal to me, in a single glance, every step of my own spiritual history!

She seemed to follow my eyes, and guess from them the workings of my heart; for now, in a low, half-abstracted voice, as Diotima may have talked of old, she began to speak of rest and labour, of death and life; of a labour which is perfect rest—of a daily death, which is but daily birth—of weakness, which is the strength of God; and so she wandered on in her speech to Him who died for us. And gradually she turned to me. She laid one finger solemnly on my listless palm, as her words and voice became more intense, more personal. She talked of Him, as Mary may have talked just risen from His feet. She spoke of Him as I had never heard Him spoken of before—with a tender passionate loyalty, kept down and softened by the deepest awe. The sense of her intense belief, shining out in every lineament of her face, carried conviction to my heart more than ten thousand arguments could do. It must be true!—Was not the power of it around her like a glory? She spoke of

Him as near us—watching us—in words of such eloquence that I turned half-startled to her, as if pected to see Him standing by her side.

She spoke of Him as the great Reformer; and yet as the true conservative; the inspirer of all new truths, revealing in His Bible to every age abysses of new wisdom, as the times require; and yet the vindicator of all which is ancient and eternal—the justifier of His own dealings with man from the beginning. She spoke of Him as the true demagogue—the Champion of the poor; and yet as the true King, above and below all earthly rank; on whose will alone all real superiority of man to man, all the time-justified and time-honoured usages of the family, the society, the nation, stand and shall stand for ever.

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And then she changed her tone; and in a voice of infinite tenderness she spoke of Him as the Creator, the Word, the Inspirer, the only perfect Artist, the Fountain of all Genius.

She made me feel—would that His ministers had made me feel it before, since they say that they believe it—that He had passed victorious through my vilest temptations, that He sympathised with my every struggle.

She told me how He, in the first dawn of manhood, full of the dim consciousness of His own power, full of strange yearning presentiments about his own sad and glorious destiny, went up into the wilderness, as every youth, above all every genius, must, there to be

tempted of the devil. She told how alone with the wild beasts, and the brute powers of nature, He saw into the open secret—the mystery of man's twofold life, His kingship over earth, His sonship under God: and conquered in the might of His knowledge. How He was tempted, like every genius, to use His creative powers for selfish ends—to yield to the lust of display and singularity, and break through those laws which He came to reveal and to fulfil—to do one little act of evil, that He might secure thereby the harvest of good which was the object of His life: and how He had conquered in the faith that He was the Son of God. She told me how He had borne the sorrows of genius; how the slightest pang that I had ever felt was but a dim faint pattern of His; how He, above all men, had felt the agony of calumny, misconception, misinterpretation; how He had fought with bigotry and stupidity, casting His pearls before swine, knowing full well what it was to speak to the deaf and the blind; how He had wept over Jerusalem, in the bitterness of disappointed patriotism, when He had tried in vain to awaken within a nation of slavish and yet rebellious bigots the consciousness of their glorious calling. . . .

It was too much—I hid my face in the coverlet, and burst out into long, low, and yet most happy weeping. She rose and went to the window, and beckoned Katie from the room within.

"I am afraid," she said, "my conversation has been too much for him."

"Showers sweeten the air," said Katie; and truly enough, as my own lightened brain told me.

Eleanor—for so I must call her now—stood watching me for a few minutes, and then glided back to the bedside, and sat down again.

"You find the room quiet?"

"Wonderfully quiet. The roar of the city outside is almost soothing, and the noise of every carriage seems to cease suddenly just as it becomes painfully near."

"We have had straw laid down," she answered, "all along this part of the street."

This last drop of kindness filled the cup to overflowing: a veil fell from before my eyes—it was she who had been my friend, my guardian angel, from the beginning!

"You—you—idiot that I have been! I see it all now. It was you who laid that paper to catch my eye on that first evening at D * * * *!—you paid my debt to my cousin!—you visited Mackaye in his last illness!"

She made a sign of assent.

"You saw from the beginning my danger, my weakness!—you tried to turn me from my frantic and fruitless passion!—you tried to save me from the very gulf into which I forced myself!—and I—I have hated you in return—cherished suspicions too ridiculous to confess, only equalled by the absurdity of that other dream!"

"Would that other dream have ever given you peace, even if it had ever become reality?"

Alton's declaration of love.

She spoke gently, slowly, seriously; waiting between each question for the answer which I dared not give.

AL. "What was it that you adored? a soul or a face? The inward reality or the outward symbol, which is only valuable as a sacrament of the loveliness within?"

"Ay!" thought I, "and was that loveliness within? L. FS What was that beauty but a hollow mask?" How barren, borrowed, trivial, every thought and word of hers seemed now, as I looked back upon them, in comparison with the rich luxuriance, the startling originality, of thought, and deed, and sympathy, in her who now sat by me, wan and faded, beautiful no more as men call beauty, but with the spirit of an archangel gazing from those clear, fiery eyes! And as I looked at her, an emotion utterly new to me AL. arose; utter trust, delight, submission, gratitude, awe —if it was love, it was love as of a dog towards his master. . . .

"Ay," I murmured, half unconscious that I spoke aloud, "her I loved, and love no longer; but you, you I worship, and for ever!"

"Worship God," she answered. "If it shall please you hereafter to call me friend, I shall refuse neither the name nor its duties. But remember always, that whatsoever interest I feel in you, and, indeed, have E. felt from the first time I saw your poems, I cannot give or accept friendship upon any ground so shallow and changeable as personal preference. The time was when I thought it a mark of superior intellect and

refinement to be as exclusive in my friendships as in my theories. Now I have learnt that that is most spiritual and noble which is also most universal. If we are to call each other friends, it must be for a reason which equally includes the outcast and the profligate, the felon and the slave."

"What do you mean?" I asked, half disappointed.

"Only for the sake of Him who died for all alike."

Why did she rise and call Crossthwaite from the next room where he was writing? Was it from the womanly tact and delicacy which feared lest my excited feelings might lead me on to some too daring expression, and give me the pain of a rebuff, however gentle; or was it that she wished him, as well as me, to hear the memorable words which followed, to which she seemed to have been all along alluring me, and calling up in my mind, one by one, the very questions to which she had prepared the answers?

"That name!" I answered. "Alas! has it not been in every age the watchword, not of an all-embracing charity, but of self-conceit and bigotry, excommunication and persecution?"

"That is what men have made it; not God, or He who bears it, the Son of God. Yes, men have separated from each other, slandered each other, murdered each other in that name, and blasphemed it by that very act. But when did they unite in any name but that? Look all history through—from the early churches, unconscious and infantile ideas of God's kingdom, as Eden was of the human race, when love

alone was law, and none said that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common—Whose name was the bond of unity for that brotherhood, such as the earth had never seen—when the Roman lady and the Negro slave partook together at the table of the same bread and wine, and sat together at the feet of the Syrian tent-maker?—'One is our Master, even Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, and in Him we are all brothers.' Not self-chosen preference for His precepts, but the overwhelming faith in His presence, His rule, His love, bound those rich hearts together. Look onward, too, at the first followers of St. Bennet and St. Francis, at the Cameronians among their Scottish hills, or the little persecuted flock who in a dark and godless time gathered around Wesley by pit-mouths and on Cornish cliffs—Look, too, at the great societies of our own days, which, however imperfectly, still lovingly and earnestly do their measure of God's work at home and abroad; and say, when was there ever real union, co-operation, philanthropy, equality, brotherhood, among men, save in loyalty to Him—Jesus, who died upon the cross?"

And she bowed her head reverently before that unseen Majesty; and then looked up at us again—Those eyes, now brimming full of earnest tears, would have melted stonier hearts than ours that day.

"Do you not believe me? Then I must quote against you one of your own prophets—a ruined angel—even as you might have been.

"When [redacted], the revolutionary, about to die, as is the fate of such, by the hands of revolutionaries, was asked his age, he answered, they say, that it was the same as that of the 'bon sans-culotte Jesus.' I do not blame those who shrink from that speech as blasphemous. I, too, have spoken hasty words and hard, and prided myself on breaking the bruised reed, and quenching the smoking flax. Time was when I should have been the loudest in denouncing poor Camille; but I have long since seemed to see in those words the distortion of an almighty truth—a truth that shall shake thrones, and principalities, and powers, and fill the earth with its sound, as with the trump of God; a prophecy like Balaam's of old—'I shall see Him, but not nigh; I shall behold Him, but not near.' . . . Take all the heroes, prophets, poets, philosophers—where will you find the true demagogue—the speaker to man simply as man—the friend of publicans and sinners, the stern foe of the Scribe and the Pharisee—with whom was no respect of persons—where is he? Socrates and Plato were noble; [redacted] and Confutzee, for aught we know, were nobler still; but what were they but the exclusive mystagogues of an enlightened few, like our own Emersons and Strausses, to compare great with small? [What gospel have they, or Strauss or Emerson, for the poor, the suffering, the oppressed? The People's Friend? Where will you find him, but in Jesus of Nazareth?"]

"We feel that; I assure you, we feel that," said

Crossthwaite. "There are thousands of us who delight in His moral teaching, as the perfection of human excellence."

"And what gospel is there in a moral teaching? What good news is it to the savage of St. Giles, to the artisan, crushed by the competition of others and his own evil habits, to tell him that he can be free—if he can make himself free?—That all men are his equals—if he can rise to their level, or pull them down to his?—All men his brothers—if he can only stop them from devouring him, or making it necessary for him to devour them? Liberty, equality, and brotherhood? Let the history of every nation, of every revolution—let your own sad experience speak—have they been aught as yet but delusive phantoms—angels that turned to fiends the moment you seemed about to clasp them?) Remember the tenth of April, and the plots thereof, and answer your own hearts!"

Crossthwaite buried his face in his hands.

"What!" I answered, passionately, "will you rob us poor creatures of our only faith, our only hope on earth? Let us be deceived, and deceived again, yet we will believe! We will hope on in spite of hope. We may die, but the idea lives for ever. Liberty, equality, and fraternity must come. We know, we know, that they must come; and woe to those who seek to rob us of our faith!"

"Keep, keep your faith," she cried; "for it is not yours, but God's, who gave it! But do not seek to realise that idea for yourselves."

"Why, then, in the name of reason and mercy?"

"Because it is realised already for you. You are free; God has made you free. You are equals—you are brothers; for He is your king who is no respecter of persons. He is your king, who has bought for you the rights of sons of God. He is your king, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth; who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet. That was Luther's charter,—with that alone he freed half Europe. That is your charter, and mine; the everlasting ground of our rights, our mights, our duties, of ever-gathering storm for the oppressor, of ever-brightening sunshine for the oppressed. Own no other. Claim your investiture as free men from none but God. His will, His love, is a stronger ground, surely, than abstract rights and ethnological opinions. Abstract rights? What ground, what root have they, but the ever-changing opinions of men, born anew and dying anew with each fresh generation?—while the word of God stands sure—'You are mine, and I am yours, bound to you in an everlasting covenant.'

"Abstract rights? They are sure to end, in practice, only in the tyranny of their father—opinion. In favoured England here, the notions of abstract right among the many are not so incorrect, thanks to three centuries of Protestant civilisation; but only because the right notions suit the many at this moment. But in America, even now, the same ideas of abstract right do not interfere with the tyranny of the white man over the black. Why should they? The white man

is handsomer, stronger, cunninger, worthier than the black. The black is more like an ape than the white man—he is—the fact is there; and no notions of an abstract right will put that down: nothing but another fact—a mightier, more universal fact—Jesus of Nazareth died for the negro as well as for the white. Looked at apart from Him, each race, each individual of mankind, stands separate and alone, owing no more brotherhood to each other than wolf to wolf, or pike to pike—himself a mightier beast of prey—even as he has proved himself in every age. Looked at as he is, as joined into one family in Christ, his archetype and head, even the most frantic declamations of the French democrat about the majesty of the people, the divinity of mankind, become rational, reverent, and literal. God's grace out-rivals all man's boasting—'I have said, ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most Highest:'—'children of God, members of Christ, of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,'—'kings and priests to God,'—free inheritors of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of prudence and courage, of reverence and love, the spirit of Him who has said, 'Behold, the days come, when I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and no one shall teach his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the least even unto the greatest. Ay, even on the slaves and on the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my spirit, saith the Lord!'"

"And that is really in the Bible?" asked Crossthwaite.

"Ay"—she went on, her figure dilating, and her eyes flashing, like an inspired prophetess—"that is in the Bible! What would you more than that? That is your charter: the only ground of all charters. You, like all mankind, have had dim inspirations, confused yearnings after your future destiny, and, like all the world from the beginning, you have tried to realise, by self-willed methods of your own, what you can only do by God's inspiration, by God's method. Like the builders of Babel in old time, you have said, 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top shall reach to heaven'—And God has confounded you as he did them. By mistrust, division, passion, and folly, you are scattered abroad. Even in these last few days, the last dregs of your late plot have exploded miserably and ludicrously—your late companions are in prison, and the name of Chartist is a laughing-stock as well as an abomination."

"Good Heavens! Is this true?" asked I, looking at Crossthwaite for confirmation.

"Too true, dear boy, too true: and if it had not been for these two angels here, I should have been in Newgate now!"

"Yes," she went on. "The Charter seems dead, and liberty farther off than ever."

"That seems true enough, indeed," said I, bitterly.

"Yes. But it is because Liberty is God's beloved child, that He will not have her purity sullied by the touch of the profane. Because He loves the people, He will allow none but Himself to lead the people.

Because He loves the people, He will teach the people by afflictions. And even now, while all this madness has been destroying itself, He has been hiding you in His secret place from the strife of tongues, that you may have to look for a state founded on better things than Acts of Parliament, social contracts, and abstract rights—a city whose foundations are in the eternal promises, whose builder and maker is God."

She paused.—"Go on, go on," cried Crossthwaite and I in the same breath.

"That state, that city, Jesus said, was come—was now within us, had we eyes to see. And it is come. Call it the church, the gospel, civilisation, freedom, democracy, association, what you will—I shall call it by the name by which my Master spoke of it—the name which includes all these, and more than these—the kingdom of God. 'Without observation,' as He promised, secretly, but mightily, it has been growing, spreading, since that first Whitsuntide; civilising, humanising, uniting this distracted earth. Men have fancied they found it in this system or in that, and in them only. They have cursed it in its own name, when they found it too wide for their own narrow notions. They have cried, 'Lo here!' and 'Lo there!' 'To this communion!' or 'To that set of opinions.' But it has gone its way—the way of Him who made all things, and redeemed all things to Himself. In every age it has been a gospel to the poor. In every age it has, sooner or later, claimed the steps of civilisation, the discoveries of science, as God's inspirations,

not man's inventions. In every age, it has taught men to do that by God which they had failed in doing without Him. It is now ready, if we may judge by the signs of the times, once again to penetrate, to convert, to reorganise, the political and social life of England, perhaps of the world; to vindicate democracy as the will and gift of God. Take it for the ground of your rights. If, henceforth, you claim political enfranchisement, claim it not as mere men, who may be villains, savages, animals, slaves of their own prejudices and passions; but as members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore bound to realise it on earth. All other rights are mere mights—mere selfish demands to become tyrants in your turn. If you wish to justify your Charter, do it on that ground. Claim your share in national life only because the nation is a spiritual body, whose king is the Son of God; whose work, whose national character and powers, are allotted to it by the Spirit of Christ. Claim universal suffrage, only on the ground of the universal redemption of mankind—the universal priesthood of Christians. That argument will conquer, when all have failed; for God will make it conquer. Claim the disenfranchisement of every man, rich or poor, who breaks the laws of God and man, not merely because he is an obstacle to you, but because he is a traitor to your common King in heaven, and to the spiritual kingdom of which he is a citizen. Denounce the effete idol of property-quali-

fication, not because it happens to strengthen class interests against you, but because, as your mystic dream reminded you, and, therefore, as you knew long ago, there is no real rank, no real power, but worth; and worth consists not in property, but in the grace of God. Claim, if you will, annual parliaments, as a means of enforcing the responsibility of rulers to the Christian community, of which they are to be, not the lords, but the ministers—the servants of all. But claim these, and all else for which you long, not from man, but from God, the King of men. And therefore, before you attempt to obtain them, make yourselves worthy of them—perhaps by that process you will find some of them have become less needful. At all events, do not ask, do not hope, that He will give them to you before you are able to profit by them. Believe that He has kept them from you hitherto, because they would have been curses, and not blessings. Oh! look back, look back, at the history of English Radicalism for the last half century, and judge by your own deeds, your own words; were you fit for those privileges which you so frantically demanded? Do not answer me, that those who had them were equally unfit; but thank God, if the case be indeed so, that your incapacity was not added to theirs, to make confusion worse confounded! Learn a new lesson. Believe at last that you are in Christ, and become new creatures. With those miserable, awful farce tragedies of April and June, let old things pass away, and all things

become new. Believe that your kingdom is not of this world, but of One whose servants must not fight. He that believeth, as the prophet says, will not make haste. Beloved suffering brothers! are not your times in the hand of One who loved you to the death, who conquered, as you must do, not by wrath, but by martyrdom? Try no more to meet Mammon with his own weapons, but commit your cause to Him who judges righteously, who is even now coming out of His place to judge the earth, and to help the fatherless and poor unto their right, that the man of the world may be no more exalted against them—the poor man of Nazareth, crucified for you!"

She ceased, and there was silence for a few moments, as if angels were waiting, hushed, to carry our repentance to the throne of Him we had forgotten.

Crossthwaite had kept his face fast buried in his hands; now he looked up with brimming eyes—

"I see it—I see it all now. Oh, my God! my God! what infidels we have been!"

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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MIRACLES AND SCIENCE.

SUNRISE, they say, often at first draws up and deepens the very mists which it is about to scatter: and even so, as the excitement of my first conviction cooled, dark doubts arose to dim the new-born light of hope and trust within me. The question of miracles had been ever since I had read Strauss my greatest stumbling-block—perhaps not unwillingly, for my doubts pampered my sense of intellectual acuteness and scientific knowledge; and "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." But now that they interfered with nobler, more important, more immediately practical ideas, I longed to have them removed—I longed even to swallow them down on trust—to take the miracles "into the bargain" as it were, for the sake of that mighty gospel of deliverance for the people which accompanied them. Mean subterfuge! which would not, could not, satisfy me. The thing was too precious, too all-important, to take one tittle of it on trust. I could not bear the consciousness of one hollow spot—the nether fires of doubt glaring through, even at one little crevice. I took my doubts to Lady Ellerton—

Eleanor, as I must now call her, for she never allowed herself to be addressed by her title—and she referred me to her uncle—

"I could say somewhat on that point myself. But since your doubts are scientific ones, I had rather that you should discuss them with one whose knowledge of such subjects you, and all England with you, must revere."

"Ah, but—pardon me; he is a clergyman."

"And therefore bound to prove, whether he believes in his own proof or not. Unworthy suspicion!" she cried, with a touch of her old manner. "If you had known that man's literary history for the last thirty years, you would not suspect him, at least, of sacrificing truth and conscience to interest, or to fear of the world's insults."

I was rebuked; and not without hope and confidence, I broached the question to the good dean when he came in—as he happened to do that very day.

"I hardly like to state my difficulties," I began—"for I am afraid that I must hurt myself in your eyes by offending your—prejudices, if you will pardon so plain-spoken an expression."

"If," he replied, in his bland courtly way, "I am so unfortunate as to have any prejudices left, you cannot do me a greater kindness than by offending them—or by any other means, however severe—to make me conscious of the locality of such a secret canker."

"But I am afraid that your own teaching has

created, or at least corroborated, these doubts of mine."

"How so?"

"You first taught me to revere science. You first taught me to admire and trust the immutable order, the perfect harmony of the laws of Nature."

"Ah! I comprehend now!" he answered, in a somewhat mournful tone—"How much we have to answer for! How often, in our carelessness, we offend those little ones, whose souls are precious in the sight of God! I have thought long and earnestly on the very subject which now distresses you; perhaps every doubt which has passed through your mind has exercised my own; and, strange to say, you first set me on that new path of thought. A conversation which passed between us years ago at D * * * * on the antithesis of natural and revealed religion—perhaps you recollect it?"

Yes, I recollected it better than he fancied, and recollected too—I thrust the thought behind me—it was even yet intolerable.

"That conversation first awoke in me the sense of an hitherto unconscious inconsistency—a desire to reconcile two lines of thought—which I had hitherto considered as parallel, and impossible to unite. To you, and to my beloved niece here, I owe gratitude for that evening's talk; and you are freely welcome to all my conclusions, for you have been, indirectly, the originator of them all."

"Then, I must confess that miracles seem to me

impossible, just because they break the laws of Nature. Pardon me—but there seems something blasphemous in supposing that God can mar His own order: His power I do not call in question, but the very thought of His so doing is abhorrent to me."

"It is as abhorrent to me as it can be to you, to Goethe, or to Strauss; and yet I believe firmly in our Lord's miracles."

"How so, if they break the laws of Nature?

"Who told you, my dear young friend, that to break the customs of Nature, is to break her laws? A phenomenon, an appearance, whether it be a miracle or a comet, need not contradict them because it is rare, because it is as yet not referable to them. Nature's deepest laws, her only true laws, are her invisible ones. All analyses (I think you know enough to understand my terms), whether of appearances, of causes, or of elements, only lead us down to fresh appearances—we cannot see a law, let the power of our lens be ever so immense. The true causes remain just as impalpable, as unfathomable as ever, eluding equally our microscope and our induction—ever tending towards some great primal law, as Mr. Grove has well shown lately in his most valuable pamphlet—some great primal law, I say, manifesting itself, according to circumstances, in countless diverse and unexpected forms—till all that the philosopher as well as the divine can say, is—the Spirit of Life, impalpable, transcendental, direct from God, is the only real cause. 'It bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,

but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.' What, if miracles should be the orderly result of some such deep, most orderly, and yet most spiritual law?"

"I feel the force of your argument, but——"

"But you will confess, at least, that you, after the fashion of the crowd, have begun your argument by begging the very question in dispute, and may have, after all, created the very difficulty which torments you."

"I confess it; but I cannot see how the miracles of Jesus—of our Lord—have anything of order in them."

"Tell me, then—to try the Socratic method—is disease, or health, the order and law of Nature?"

"Health, surely; we all confess that by calling diseases disorders."

"Then, would one who healed diseases be a restorer, or a breaker of order?"

"A restorer, doubtless; but——"

"Like a patient scholar, and a scholarly patient, allow me to 'exhibit' my own medicines according to my own notion of the various crises of your distemper. I assure you I will not play you false, or entrap you by quips and special pleading. You are aware that our Lord's miracles were almost exclusively miracles of healing—restorations of that order of health which disease was breaking—that when the Scribes and Pharisees, superstitious and sense-bound, asked him for a sign from heaven, a contra-natural prodigy, he re-

fused them as peremptorily as he did the fiend's 'Command these stones that they be made bread.' You will quote against me the water turned into wine, as an exception to this rule. St. Augustine answered that objection centuries ago, by the same argument as I am now using. Allow Jesus to have been the Lord of Creation, and what was He doing then, but what He does in the maturing of every grape—transformed from air and water even as that wine in Cana? Goethe, himself, unwittingly, has made Mephistopheles even say as much as that—

"'Wine is sap, and grapes are wood,
The wooden board yields wine as good.'"

"But the time?—so infinitely shorter than that which Nature usually occupies in the process?"

"Time and space are no Gods, as a wise German says; and as the electric telegraph ought already to have taught you. They are customs, but who has proved them to be laws of Nature? No; analyse these miracles one by one, fairly, carefully, scientifically, and you will find that if you want prodigies really blasphemous and absurd, infractions of the laws of Nature, amputated limbs growing again, and dead men walking away with their heads under their arms, you must go to the Popish legends, but not to the miracles of the Gospels. And now for your 'but'——"

"The raising of the dead to life? Surely death is the appointed end of every animal—ay, of every species, and of man among the rest."

"Who denies it? But is premature death?—the death of Jairus's daughter, of the widow's son at Nain, the death of Jesus Himself, in the prime of youth and vigour—or rather that gradual decay of ripe old age, through which I now, thank God, so fast am travelling? What nobler restoration of order, what clearer vindication of the laws of Nature from the disorder of diseases, than to recall the dead to their natural and normal period of life?"

I was silent a few moments, having nothing to answer; then—

"After all, these may have been restorations of the law of Nature. But why was the law broken in order to restore it? The Tenth of April has taught me, at least, that disorder cannot cast disorder out."

"Again I ask, why do you assume the very point in question? Again I ask, who knows what really are the laws of Nature? You have heard Bacon's golden rule—'Nature is conquered by obeying her'?"

"I have."

"Then who more likely, who more certain, to fulfil that law to hitherto unattained perfection, than He who came to obey, not outward nature merely, but, as Bacon meant, the inner ideas, the spirit of Nature, which is the will of God?—He who came to do utterly, not His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him? Who is so presumptuous as to limit the future triumphs of science? Surely no one who has watched her giant strides during the last century. Shall Stephenson and Faraday, and the inventors of the

calculating machine, and the electric telegraph, have fulfilled such wonders by their weak and partial obedience to the 'Will of God expressed in things'—and He who obeyed, even unto the death, have possessed no higher power than theirs?"

"Indeed," I said, "your words stagger me. But there is another old objection which they have reawakened in my mind. You will say I am shifting my ground sadly. But you must pardon me."

"Let us hear. They need not be irrelevant. The unconscious logic of association is often deeper and truer than any syllogism."

"These modern discoveries in medicine seem to show that Christ's miracles may be attributed to natural causes."

"And thereby justify them. For what else have I been arguing? The difficulty lies only in the rationalist's shallow and sensuous view of Nature, and in his ambiguous, slip-slop trick of using the word natural to mean, in one sentence, 'material,' and in the next, as I use it, only 'normal and orderly.' Every new wonder in medicine which this great age discovers—what does it prove, but that Christ need have broken no natural laws to do that of old, which can be done now without breaking them?—if you will but believe that these gifts of healing are all inspired and revealed by Him who is the Great Physician, the Life, the Lord of that vital energy by whom all cures are wrought.

"The surgeons of St. George's make the boy walk

who has been lame from his mother's womb. But have they given life to a single bone or muscle of his limbs? They have only put them into that position—those circumstances in which the God-given life in them can have its free and normal play, and produce the cure which they only assist. I claim that miracle of science, as I do all future ones, as the inspiration of Him who made the lame to walk in Judea, not by producing new organs, but by His creative will—quickening and liberating those which already existed.

"The mesmerist, again, says that he can cure a spirit of infirmity, an hysteric or paralytic patient, by shedding forth on them his own vital energy; and therefore he will have it that Christ's miracles were but mesmeric feats. I grant, for the sake of argument, that he possesses the power which he claims; though I may think his facts too new, too undigested, often too exaggerated, to claim my certain assent. But, I say, I take you on your own ground; and, indeed, if man be the image of God, his vital energy may, for aught I know, be able, like God's, to communicate some spark of life—But then, what must have been the vital energy of Him who was the life itself; who was filled without measure with the spirit, not only of humanity, but with that of God the Lord and Giver of life? Do but let the Bible tell its own story; grant, for the sake of argument, the truth of the dogmas which it asserts throughout, and it becomes a consistent whole. When a man begins, as Strauss does, by assuming the falsity of its conclusions, no

wonder if he finds its premises a fragmentary chaos of contradictions."

"And what else?" asked Eleanor, passionately—"what else is the meaning of that highest human honour, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but a perennial token that the same life-giving spirit is the free right of all?"

And thereon followed happy, peaceful, hopeful words, which the reader, if he call himself a Christian, ought to be able to imagine for himself. I am afraid that, writing from memory, I should do as little justice to them as I have to the dean's arguments in this chapter. Of the consequences which they produced in me, I will speak anon.

Cousin dead: Eleanor tells Alton about Downes' coat causing George's death, & how ill Lydia is. Eleanor also recreates her own life-story.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

NEMESIS.

IX = Sc.

It was a month or more before I summoned courage to ask after my cousin.

Eleanor looked solemnly at me.

"Did you not know it? He is dead."

G.

"Dead!" I was almost stunned by the announcement.

"Of typhus fever. He died three weeks ago; and not only he, but the servant who brushed his clothes, and the shopman who had a few days before brought him a new coat home."

"How did you learn all this?"

"From Mr. Crossthwaite. But the strangest part of the sad story is to come. Crossthwaite's suspicions were aroused by some incidental circumstance, and knowing of Downes's death, and the fact that you most probably caught your fever in that miserable being's house, he made such inquiries as satisfied him that it was no other than your cousin's coat——"

"Which covered the corpses in that fearful chamber?"

"It was indeed."

Just, awful God. And this was the consistent Nemesis of all poor George's thrift and cunning, of his determination to carry the buy-cheap-and-sell-dear commercialism, in which he had been brought up, into every act of life! Did I rejoice? No; all revenge, all spite, had been scourged out of me. I mourned for him as for a brother, till the thought flashed across me—Lillian was free. Half unconscious, I stammered her name inquiringly.

"Judge for yourself," answered Eleanor, mildly, yet with a deep severe meaning in her tone.

I was silent.

. . . . .

The tempest in my heart was ready to burst forth again; but she, my guardian angel, soothed it for me.

"She is much changed; sorrow and sickness—for she, too, has had the fever, and, alas! less resignation or peace within, than those who love her would have wished to see—have worn her down. Little remains now of that loveliness——"

"Which I idolised in my folly!"

"Thank God, thank God! that you see that at last: I knew it all along. I knew that there was nothing there for your heart to rest upon—nothing to satisfy your intellect—and, therefore, I tried to turn you from your dream. I did it harshly, angrily, too sharply, yet not explicitly enough. I ought to have made allowances for you. I should have known how enchanting, intoxicating, mere outward perfections must have been to one of your perceptions, shut

see p. I, 248

out so long as you have been from the beautiful in art and nature. But I was cruel. Alas! I had not then learnt to sympathise; and I have often since felt with terror that I, too, may have many of your sins to answer for; that I, even I, helped to drive you on to bitterness and despair."

"Oh, do not say so! You have done to me, meant to me, nothing but good."

"Be not too sure of that. You little know me. You little know the pride which I have fostered—even the mean anger against you, for being the portégé of any one but myself. That exclusiveness, and shyness, and proud reserve, is the bane of our English character—it has been the bane of mine—daily I strive to root it out. Come—I will do so now. You wonder why I am here. You shall hear somewhat of my story; and do not fancy that I am showing you a peculiar mark of honour or confidence. If the history of my life can be of use to the meanest, they are welcome to the secrets of my inmost heart.

"I was my parents' only child, an heiress, highly born, and highly educated. Every circumstance of humanity which could pamper pride was mine, and I battened on the poison. I painted, I sang, I wrote in prose and verse—they told me, not without success. Men said that I was beautiful—I knew that myself, and revelled and gloried in the thought. Accustomed to see myself the centre of all my parents' hopes and fears, to be surrounded by flatterers, to indulge in secret the still more fatal triumph of contempt for

those I thought less gifted than myself, self became the centre of my thoughts. Pleasure was all I thought of. But not what the vulgar call pleasure. That I disdained, while, like you, I worshipped all that was pleasurable to the intellect and the taste. The beautiful was my God. I lived, in deliberate intoxication, on poetry, music, painting, and every antitype of them which I could find in the world around. At last I met with—one whom you once saw. He first awoke in me the sense of the vast duties and responsibilities of my station—his example first taught me to care for the many rather than for the few. It was a blessed lesson: yet even that I turned to poison, by making self, still self, the object of my very benevolence. To be a philanthropist, a philosopher, a feudal queen, amid the blessings and the praise of dependent hundreds—that was my new ideal; for that I turned the whole force of my intellect to the study of history, of social and economic questions. From Bentham and Malthus to Fourier and Proudhon, I read them all. I made them all fit into that idol temple of self which I was rearing, and fancied that I did my duty, by becoming one of the great ones of the earth. My ideal was not the crucified Nazarene, but some [illegible], in luxurious splendour, pampering his pride by bestowing as a favour those mercies which God commands as the right of all. I thought to serve God, forsooth, by serving Mammon and myself. Fool that I was! I could not see God's handwriting on the wall against

me. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!' . . .

"You gave me, unintentionally, a warning hint. The capabilities which I saw in you made me suspect that those below might be more nearly my equals than I had yet fancied. Your vivid descriptions of the misery among whole classes of workmen—misery caused and ever increased by the very system of society itself—gave a momentary shock to my fairy palace. They drove me back upon the simple old question, which has been asked by every honest heart, age after age, 'What right have I to revel in luxury while thousands are starving? Why do I pride myself on doling out to them small fractions of that wealth, which, if sacrificed utterly and at once, might help to raise hundreds to a civilisation as high as my own?' I could not face the thought; and angry with you for having awakened it, however unintentionally, I shrank back behind the pitiable, worn-out fallacy, that luxury was necessary to give employment. I knew that it was a fallacy; I knew that the labour spent in producing unnecessary things for one rich man may just as well have gone in producing necessaries for a hundred poor, or employ the architect and the painter for public bodies as well as private individuals. That even for the production of luxuries, the monopolising demand of the rich was not required—that the appliances of real civilisation, the landscapes, gardens, stately rooms, baths, books, pictures, works of art, collections of curiosities, which now went

to pamper me alone—me, one single human soul—might be helping, in an associate society, to civilise a hundred families, now debarred from them by isolated poverty, without robbing me of an atom of the real enjoyment or benefit of them. I knew it, I say, to be a fallacy, and yet I hid behind it from the eye of God. Besides, 'it always had been so—the few rich, and the many poor. I was but one more among millions.'"

She paused a moment as if to gather strength, and then continued:

"The blow came. My idol—for he, too, was an idol—To please him I had begun—To please myself in pleasing him, I was trying to become great—and with him went from me that sphere of labour which was to witness the triumph of my pride. I saw the estate pass into other hands; a mighty change passed over me, as impossible, perhaps, as unfitting, for me to analyse. I was considered mad. Perhaps I was so: there is a divine insanity, a celestial folly, which conquers worlds. At least, when that period was past, I had done and suffered so strangely, that nothing henceforth could seem strange to me. I had broken the yoke of custom and opinion. My only ground was now the bare realities of human life and duty. In poverty and loneliness I thought out the problems of society, and seemed to myself to have found the one solution—self-sacrifice. Following my first impulse, I had given largely to every charitable institution I could hear of—God forbid that I should regret those gifts—yet the money, I soon found, might have been

better spent. [One by one, every institution disappointed me; they seemed, after all, only means for keeping the poor in their degradation, by making it just not intolerable to them—means for enabling Mammon to draw fresh victims into his den, by taking off his hands those whom he had already worn out into uselessness.] [Then I tried association among my own sex—among the most miserable and degraded of them. I simply tried to put them into a position in which they might work for each other, and not for a single tyrant; in which that tyrant's profits might be divided among the slaves themselves. [Experienced men warned me that I should fail; that such a plan would be destroyed by the innate selfishness and rivalry of human nature; that it demanded what was impossible to find, good faith, fraternal love, overruling moral influence.] I answered, that I knew that already; that nothing but Christianity alone could supply that want, but that it could and should supply it; that I would teach them to live as sisters, by living with them as their sister myself. To become the teacher, the minister, the slave of those whom I was trying to rescue, was now my one idea; to lead them on, not by machinery, but by precept, by example, by the influence of every gift and talent which God had bestowed upon me; to devote to them my enthusiasm, my eloquence, my poetry, my art, my science; to tell them who had bestowed these gifts on me, and would bestow, to each according to her measure, the same on them; to make my workrooms,

in one word, not a machinery, but a family. And I have succeeded—as others will succeed, long after my name, my small endeavours, are forgotten amid the great new world—new Church I should have said—of enfranchised and fraternal labour."

And this was the suspected aristocrat! Oh, my brothers, my brothers! little you know how many a noble soul, among those ranks which you consider only as your foes, is yearning to love, to help, to live and die for you, did they but know the way! Is it their fault if God has placed them where they are? Is it their fault, if they refuse to part with their wealth, before they are sure that such a sacrifice would really be a mercy to you? Show yourselves worthy of associations. Show that you can do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God, as brothers before one Father, subjects of one crucified King—and see then whether the spirit of self-sacrifice is dead among the rich! See whether there are not left in England yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Mammon, who will not fear to "give their substance to the free," if they find that the Son has made you free—free from your own sins, as well as from the sins of others!

Conversation: between Eleanor & Alton in which she defends the clergy as now awakening to their responsibilities & the people, and the uniform action of his true to America as a part of the people.

CHAPTER XL

PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

Sc. LXI. clergy.

"But after all," I said one day, "the great practical objection still remains unanswered—the clergy? Are we to throw ourselves into their hands after all? Are we, who have been declaiming all our lives against priestcraft, voluntarily to forge again the chains of our slavery to a class whom we neither trust nor honour?"

She smiled. "If you will examine the Prayer-Book, you will not find, as far as I am aware, anything which binds a man to become the slave of the priesthood, voluntarily or otherwise. Whether the people become priest-ridden or not, hereafter, will depend, as it always has done, utterly on themselves. As long as the people act upon their spiritual liberty, and live with eyes undimmed by superstitious fear, fixed in loving boldness on their Father in heaven, and their King, the first-born among many brethren, the priesthood will remain, as God intended them, only the interpreters and witnesses of His will and His kingdom. But let them turn their eyes from Him to aught in earth or heaven beside, and there will be no

tokens.

lack of priestcraft, of veils to hide Him from them tyrants to keep them from Him, idols to ape His likeness. A sinful people will be sure to be a priest-ridden people; in reality, though not in name; by journalists and demagogues, if not by class-leaders and popes: and of the two, I confess I should prefer a Hildebrand to an O'Flynn."

"But," I replied, "we do not love, we do not trust, we do not respect the clergy. Has their conduct to the masses for the last century deserved that we should do so? Will you ask us to obey the men whom we despise?"

"God forbid!" she answered. "But you must surely be aware of the miraculous, ever-increasing improvement in the clergy."

"In morals," I said, "and in industry, doubtless; but not upon those points which are to us just now dearer than their morals or their industry, because they involve the very existence of our own industry and our own morals—I mean, social and political subjects. On them the clergy seem to me as ignorant, as bigoted, as aristocratic as ever."

"But suppose that there were a rapidly-increasing class among the clergy, who were willing to help you to the uttermost—and you must feel that their help would be worth having—towards the attainment of social reform, if you would waive for a time merely political reforms?"

"What?" I said, "give up the very ideas for which we have struggled, and sinned, and all but died? and

will struggle, and, if need be, die for still, or confess ourselves traitors to the common weal?"

"The Charter, like its supporters, must die to itself before it lives to God. Is it not even now farther off than ever?"

"It seems so indeed—but what do you mean?"

"You regarded the Charter as an absolute end. You made a selfish and a self-willed idol of it. And therefore God's blessing did not rest on it or you."

"We want it as a means as well as an end—as a means for the highest and widest social reform, as well as a right dependent on eternal justice."

"Let the working classes prove that, then," she replied, "in their actions now. If it be true, as I would fain believe it to be, let them show that they are willing to give up their will to God's will; to compass those social reforms by the means which God puts in their way, and wait for His own good time to give them, or not to give them, those means which they in their own minds prefer. This is what I meant by saying that Chartism must die to itself before it has a chance of living to God. You must feel, too, that Chartism has sinned—has defiled itself in the eyes of the wise, the good, the gentle. Your only way now to soften the prejudice against it is to show that you can live like men and brothers and Christians without it. You cannot wonder if the clergy shall object awhile to help you towards that Charter, which the majority of you demanded for the express purpose of destroying

the creed which the clergy do believe, however badly they may have acted upon it."

"It is all true enough—bitterly true. But yet, why do we need the help of the clergy?"

"Because you need the help of the whole nation; because there are other classes to be considered beside yourselves; because the nation is neither the few nor the many, but the all; because it is only by the co-operation of all the members of a body, that any one member can fulfil its calling in health and freedom; because, as long as you stand aloof from the clergy, or from any other class, through pride, self-interest, or wilful ignorance, you are keeping up those very class distinctions of which you and I too complain, as 'hateful equally to God and to His enemies;' and, finally, because the clergy are the class which God has appointed to unite all others; which, in as far as it fulfils its calling, and is indeed a priesthood, is above and below all rank, and knows no man after the flesh, but only on the ground of its spiritual worth, and his birthright in that kingdom which is the heritage of all."

"Truly," I answered, "the idea is a noble one—But look at the reality! Has not priestly pandering to tyrants made the Church, in every age, a scoff and a byword among free men?"

"May it ever do so," she replied, "whenever such a sin exists! But yet, look at the other side of the picture. Did not the priesthood, in the first ages, glory not in the name, but, what is better, in the

office, of democrats? Did not the Roman tyrants hunt them down as wild beasts, because they were democrats, proclaiming to the slave and to the barbarian a spiritual freedom and a heavenly citizenship, before which the Roman well knew his power must vanish into naught? Who, during the invasion of the barbarians, protected the poor against their conquerors? Who, in the middle age, stood between the baron and his serfs? Who, in their monasteries, realised spiritual democracy,—the nothingness of rank and wealth, the practical might of co-operation and self-sacrifice? Who delivered England from the Pope? Who spread throughout every cottage in the land the Bible and Protestantism, the book and the religion which declares that a man's soul is free in the sight of God? Who, at the martyr's stake in Oxford, 'lighted the candle in England that shall never be put out'? Who, by suffering, and not by rebellion, drove the last perjured Stuart from his throne, and united every sect and class in one of the noblest steps in England's progress? You will say these are the exceptions; I say nay; they are rather a few great and striking manifestations of an influence which has been, unseen though not unfelt, at work for ages, converting, consecrating, organising, every fresh invention of mankind, and which is now on the eve of christianising democracy, as it did Mediæval Feudalism, Tudor Nationalism, Whig Constitutionalism; and which will succeed in christianising it, and so alone making it rational, human, possible; because the

priesthood alone, of all human institutions, testifies of Christ the King of men, the Lord of all things, the inspirer of all discoveries; who reigns, and will reign, till He has put all things under His feet, and the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. Be sure, as it always has been, so will it be now. Without the priesthood there is no freedom for the people. Statesmen know it; and, therefore, those who would keep the people fettered, find it necessary to keep the priesthood fettered also. The people never can be themselves without co-operation with the priesthood; and the priesthood never can be themselves without co-operation with the people. They may help to make a sect-Church for the rich, as they have been doing, or a sect-Church for paupers (which is also the most subtle form of a sect-Church for the rich), as a party in England are trying now to do—as I once gladly would have done myself: but if they would be truly priests of God, and priests of the Universal Church, they must be priests of the people, priests of the masses, priests after the likeness of Him who died on the cross."

"And are there any men," I said, "who believe this? and, what is more, have courage to act upon it, now in the very hour of Mammon's triumph?"

"There are those who are willing, who are determined, whatever it may cost them, to fraternise with those whom they take shame to themselves for having neglected; to preach and to organise, in concert with them, a Holy War against the social abuses

which are England's shame; and, first and foremost, against the fiend of competition. They do not want to be dictators to the working men. They know that they have a message to the artisan, but they know, too, that the artisan has a message to them; and they are not afraid to hear it. They do not wish to make him a puppet for any system of their own; they only are willing, if he will take the hand they offer him, to devote themselves, body and soul, to the great end of enabling the artisan to govern himself; to produce in the capacity of a free man, and not of a slave; to eat the food he earns, and wear the clothes he makes. Will your working brothers co-operate with these men? Are they, do you think, such bigots as to let political differences stand between them and those who fain would treat them as their brothers; or will they fight manfully side by side with them in the battle against Mammon, trusting to God, that if in anything they are otherwise minded, He will, in His own good time, reveal even that unto them? Do you think, to take one instance, the men of your own trade would heartily join a handful of these men in an experiment of associate labour, even though there should be a clergyman or two among them?"

"Join them?" I said. "Can you ask the question? I, for one, would devote myself, body and soul, to any enterprise so noble. Crossthwaite would ask for nothing higher, than to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water to an establishment of associate workmen. But, alas! his fate is fixed for the New

World; and mine, I verily believe, for sickness and the grave. And yet I will answer for it, that, in the hopes of helping such a project, he would give up Mackaye's bequest, for the mere sake of remaining in England; and for me, if I have but a month of life, it is at the service of such men as you describe."

"Oh!" she said, musingly, "if poor Mackaye had but had somewhat more faith in the future, that fatal condition would perhaps never have been attached to his bequest. And yet, perhaps, it is better as it is. Crossthwaite's mind may want, quite as much as yours does, a few years of a simpler and brighter atmosphere to soften and refresh it again. Besides, your health is too weak, your life, I know, too valuable to your class, for us to trust you on such a voyage alone. He must go with you."

"With me?" I said. "You must be misinformed; I have no thought of leaving England."

"You know the opinion of the physicians?"

"I know that my life is not likely to be a long one; that immediate removal to a southern, if possible to a tropical climate, is considered the only means of preserving it. For the former I care little; *non est tanti vivere.* And, indeed, the latter, even if it would succeed, is impossible. Crossthwaite will live and thrive by the labour of his hands; while, for such a helpless invalid as I to travel, would be to dissipate the little capital which Mackaye has left me."

"The day will come, when society will find it profitable, as well as just, to put the means of preserving

life by travel within the reach of the poorest. But individuals must always begin by setting the examples, which the state too slowly, though surely (for the world is God's world after all), will learn to copy. All is arranged for you. Crossthwaite, you know, would have sailed ere now, had it not been for your fever. Next week you start with him for Texas. No; make no objections. All expenses are defrayed —no matter by whom."

"By you! By you! Who else?"

"Do you think that I monopolise the generosity of England? Do you think warm hearts beat only in the breasts of working men? But, if it were I, would not that be only another reason for submitting? You must go. You will have, for the next three years, such an allowance as will support you in comfort, whether you choose to remain stationary, or, as I hope, to travel southward into Mexico. Your passage-money is already paid."

Why should I attempt to describe my feelings? I gasped for breath, and looked stupidly at her for a minute or two.—The second darling hope of my life within my reach, just as the first had been snatched from me! At last I found words.

"No, no, noble lady! Do not tempt me! Who am I, the slave of impulse, useless, worn out in mind and body, that you should waste such generosity upon me? I do not refuse from the honest pride of independence; I have not man enough left in me even for that. But will you, of all people, ask me to desert

the starving suffering thousands, to whom my heart, my honour, are engaged; to give up the purpose of my life, and pamper my fancy in a luxurious paradise, while they are slaving here?"

"What? Cannot God find champions for them when you are gone? Has he not found them already? Believe me, that Tenth of April, which you fancied the death-day of liberty, has awakened a spirit in high as well as in low life, which children yet unborn will bless."

"Oh, do not mistake me! Have I not confessed my own weakness? But if I have one healthy nerve left in me, soul or body, it will retain its strength only as long as it thrills with devotion to the people's cause. If I live, I must live among them, for them. If I die, I must die at my post. I could not rest, except in labour. I dare not fly, like Jonah, from the call of God. In the deepest shade of the virgin forests, on the loneliest peak of the Cordilleras, He would find me out; and I should hear His still small voice reproving me, as it reproved the fugitive patriot-seer of old—What doest thou here, Elijah?"

I was excited, and spoke, I am afraid, after my custom, somewhat too magniloquently. But she answered only with a quiet smile:

"So you are a Chartist still?"

"If by a Chartist you mean one who fancies that a change in mere political circumstances will bring about a millennium, I am no longer one. That dream is gone—with others. But if to be a Chartist is to

love my brothers with every faculty of my soul—to wish to live and die struggling for their rights, endeavouring to make them, not electors merely, but fit to be electors, senators, kings, and priests to God and to His Christ—if that be the Chartism of the future, then am I sevenfold a Chartist, and ready to confess it before men, though I were thrust forth from every door in England."

She was silent a moment.

"'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.' Surely the old English spirit has cast its madness, and begins to speak once more as it spoke in Naseby fights and Smithfield fires!"

"And yet you would quench it in me amid the enervating climate of the tropics."

"Need it be quenched there? Was it quenched in Drake, in Hawkins, in the conquerors of Hindostan? Weakness, like strength, is from within, of the spirit, and not of sunshine. I would send you thither, that you may gain new strength, new knowledge to carry out your dream and mine. Do not refuse me the honour of preserving you. Do not forbid me to employ my wealth in the only way which reconciles my conscience to the possession of it. I have saved many a woman already; and this one thing remained—the highest of all my hopes and longings—that God would allow me, ere I die, to save a man. I have longed to find some noble soul, as Carlyle says, fallen down by the wayside, and lift it up, and heal its

wounds, and teach it the secret of its heavenly birthright, and consecrate it to its King in heaven. I have longed to find a man of the people, whom I could train to be the poet of the people."

"Me, at least, you have saved, have taught, have trained! Oh that your care had been bestowed on some more worthy object!"

"Let me, at least, then, perfect my own work. You do not—it is a sign of your humility that you do not—appreciate the value of this rest. You underrate at once your own powers, and the shock which they have received."

"If I must go, then, why so far? Why put you to so great expense? If you must be generous, send me to some place nearer home—to Italy, to the coast of Devon, or the Isle of Wight, where invalids like me are said to find all the advantages which are so often, perhaps too hastily, sought in foreign lands."

"No," she said, smiling; "you are my servant now, by the laws of chivalry, and you must fulfil my quest. I have long hoped for a tropic poet; one who should leave the routine imagery of European civilization, its meagre scenery, and physically decrepit races, for the grandeur, the luxuriance, the infinite and strongly-marked variety of tropic nature, the paradisiac beauty and simplicity of tropic humanity. I am tired of the old images of the barren alternations between Italy and the Highlands. I had once dreamt of going to the tropics myself; but my work lay elsewhere.

Go for me, and for the people. See if you cannot help to infuse some new blood into the aged veins of English literature; see if you cannot, by observing man in his mere simple and primeval state, bring home fresh conceptions of beauty, fresh spiritual and physical laws of his existence, that you may realise them here at home—(how, I see as yet but dimly; but He who teaches the facts will surely teach their application)—in the cottages, in the play-grounds, the reading-rooms, the churches of working men."

"But I know so little—I have seen so little!"

"That very fact, I flatter myself, gives you an especial vocation for my scheme. Your ignorance of cultivated English scenery, and of Italian art, will enable you to approach with a more reverent, simple, and unprejudiced eye the primeval forms of beauty—God's work, not man's. Sin you will see there, and anarchy, and tyranny, but I do not send you to look for society, but for nature. I do not send you to become a barbarian settler, but to bring home to the realms of civilisation those ideas of physical perfection, which as yet, alas! barbarism, rather than civilisation, has preserved. Do not despise your old love for the beautiful. Do not fancy that because you have let it become an idol and a tyrant, it was not therefore the gift of God. Cherish it, develop it to the last; steep your whole soul in beauty; watch it in its most vast and complex harmonies, and not less in its most faint and fragmentary traces. Only, hitherto you have blindly worshipped it; now you must learn to com-

prehend, to master, to embody it; to show it forth to men as the sacrament of Heaven, the finger-mark of God!"

Who could resist such pleading from those lips? I at least could not.

CHAPTER XLI.

FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND BROTHERHOOD.

BEFORE the same Father, the same King, crucified for all alike, we had partaken of the same bread and wine, we had prayed for the same spirit. Side by side, around the chair on which I lay propped up with pillows, [illegible] had knelt the high-born countess, the cultivated philosopher, the repentant rebel, the wild Irish girl, her slavish and exclusive creed exchanged for one more free and all-embracing; and that no extremest type of human condition might be wanting, the reclaimed Magdalene was there—two pale worn girls from Eleanor's asylum, in whom I recognised the needlewomen to whom Mackaye had taken me, on a memorable night, seven years before. Thus—and how better?—had God rewarded their loving care of [illegible].

Yes—we had knelt together: and I had felt that we were one—that there was a bond between us, real, eternal, independent of ourselves, knit not by man, but God; and the peace of God, which passes understanding, came over me like the clear sunshine after weary rain.

One by one they shook me by the hand, and quitted the room; and Eleanor and I were left alone.

"See!" she said, "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are come; but not as you expected."

Blissful, repentant tears blinded my eyes, as I replied, not to her, but to Him who spoke by her—

"Lord! not as I will, but as thou wilt!"

"Yes," she continued, "Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood are here. Realise them in thine own self, and so alone thou helpest to make them realities for all. Not from without, from Charters and Republics, but from within, from the Spirit working in each; not by wrath and haste, but by patience made perfect through suffering, canst thou proclaim their good news to the groaning masses, and deliver them, as thy Master did before thee, by the cross, and not the sword. Divine paradox!—Folly to the rich and mighty—the watchword of the weak, in whose weakness is God's strength made perfect. 'In your patience possess ye your souls, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' Yes—He came then, and the Babel-tyranny of Rome fell, even as the more fearful, more subtle, and more diabolic tyranny of Mammon shall fall ere long—suicidal, even now crumbling by its innate decay. Yes—Babylon the Great—the commercial world of selfish competition, drunken with the blood of God's people, whose merchandise is the bodies and souls of men—her doom is gone forth. And then—then—when they, the tyrants of the earth, who lived delicately with her, rejoicing in her sins,

the plutocrats and bureaucrats, the money-changers and devourers of labour, are crying to the rocks to hide them, and to the hills to cover them, from the wrath of Him that sitteth on the throne—then labour shall be free at last, and the poor shall eat and be satisfied, with things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God has prepared for those who love Him. Then the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and mankind at last shall own their King—Him in whom they are all redeemed into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and He shall reign indeed on earth, and none but His saints shall rule beside Him. And then shall this sacrament be an everlasting sign to all the nations of the world, as it has been to you this day, of freedom, equality, brotherhood, of Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will toward men. Do you believe?"

Again I answered, not her, but Him who sent her—"Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief!"

"And now farewell. I shall not see you again before you start—and ere you return—My health has been fast declining lately."

I started—I had not dared to confess to myself how thin her features had become of late. I had tried not to hear the dry and hectic cough, or see the burning spot on either cheek—but it was too true; and with a broken voice I cried:

"Oh that I might die, and join you!"

"Not so—I trust that you have still a work to do. But if not, promise me that, whatever be the event of your voyage, you will publish, in good time, an honest history of your life; extenuating nothing, exaggerating nothing, ashamed to confess or to proclaim nothing. [It may perhaps awaken some rich man to look down and take pity on the brains and hearts more noble than his own, which lie struggling in poverty and misguidance among these foul sties, which civilisation rears—and calls them cities.] Now, once again, farewell!"

She held out her hand—I would have fallen at her feet, but the thought of that common sacrament withheld me. I seized her hand, covered it with adoring kisses—Slowly she withdrew it, and glided from the room——

What need of more words? I obeyed her—sailed—and here I am.

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Yes! I have seen the land! Like a purple fringe upon the golden sea, "while parting day dies like the dolphin," there it lay upon the fair horizon—the great young free new world! and every tree, and flower, and insect on it new!—a wonder and a joy—which I shall never see. . . .

[No,—I shall never reach the land. I felt it all

along. Weaker and weaker, day by day, with bleeding lungs and failing limbs, I have travelled the ocean paths. The iron has entered too deeply into my soul. . . .

Hark! Merry voices on deck are welcoming their future home. Laugh on, happy ones!—come out of Egypt and the house of bondage, and the waste and howling wilderness of slavery and competition, workhouses and prisons, into a good land and large, a land flowing with milk and honey, where you will sit every one under his own vine and his own fig-tree, and look into the faces of your rosy children—and see in them a blessing and not a curse! Oh, England! stern mother-land, when wilt thou renew thy youth?—Thou wilderness of man's making, not God's! . . Is it not written, that the days shall come when the forest shall break forth into singing, and the wilderness shall blossom like the rose?

Hark! again, sweet and clear, across the still night sea, ring out the notes of Crossthwaite's bugle—the first luxury, poor fellow, he ever allowed himself; and yet not a selfish one, for music, like mercy, is twice blessed—

> "It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

There is the spirit-stirring marching air of the German workmen students

> "Thou, thou, thou, and thou,
> Sir Master, fare thee well."—

Perhaps a half reproachful hint to the poor old

England he is leaving. What a glorious metre! warming one's whole heart into life and energy! If I could but write in such a metre one true people's song, that should embody all my sorrow, indignation, hope—fitting last words for a poet of the people—for they will be my last words——Well—thank God! at least I shall not be buried in a London churchyard! It may be a foolish fancy—but I have made them promise to lay me up among the virgin woods, where, if the soul ever visits the place of its body's rest, I may snatch glimpses of that natural beauty from which I was barred out in life, and watch the gorgeous flowers that bloom above my dust, and hear the forest birds sing around the Poet's grave.

Hark to the grand lilt of the "Good Time Coming!"—Song which has cheered ten thousand hearts; which has already taken root, that it may live and grow for ever—fitting melody to soothe my dying ears! Ah! how should there not be A Good Time Coming?—Hope, and trust, and infinite deliverance!—a time such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive!—coming surely, soon or late, to those for whom a God did not disdain to die!

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Our only remaining duty is to give an extract from a letter written by John Crossthwaite, and dated

"GALVESTON, TEXAS, *October* 1848.

* * * * "I am happy. Katie is happy. There is peace among us here, like 'the clear downshining after rain.' But I thirst and long already for the expiration of my seven years' exile, wholesome as I believe it to be. My only wish is to return and assist in the Emancipation of Labour, and give my small aid in that fraternal union of all classes which I hear is surely, though slowly, spreading in my mother-land.

"And now for my poor friend, whose papers, according to my promise to him, I transmit to you. On the very night on which he seems to have concluded them—an hour after we had made the land—we found him in his cabin dead, his head resting on the table as peacefully as if he had slumbered. On a sheet of paper by him were written the following verses; the ink was not yet dry:

"'MY LAST WORDS.

I.

"'Weep, weep, weep, and weep,
For pauper, dolt, and slave;
Hark! from wasted moor and fen,
Feverous alley, workhouse den,
Swells the wail of Englishmen:
"Work! or the grave!"

II.

"'Down, down, down, and down,
With idler, knave, and tyrant;

Why for sluggards stint and moil?
He that will not live by toil
Has no right on English soil;
God's word's our warrant!

III.

"'Up, up, up, and up.
Face your game, and play it!
The night is past—behold the sun!—
The cup is full, the web is spun,
The Judge is set, the doom begun;
Who shall stay it?'"

THE END.

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